

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: CREATING ANTHRACITE WOMEN: THE ROLES OF ARCHITECTURE AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN IDENTITY FORMATION IN PENNSYLVANIA ANTHRACITE COMPANY TOWNS, 1854-1940

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Coal company towns are defined by the experiences of the men who owned and the men who worked in the mines, broadly ignoring the women and families who also inhabited and toiled in these spaces. In the Northeastern Pennsylvania anthracite region, women undertook a variety of methods to change their social positions through the renegotiation of their gender, ethnic, and class identities. Performing ‘proper’ middle class American gender expressions, including through the adoption of culturally-coded objects, provided working class women with greater social power and cultural autonomy within the context of systemic worker deprivation and ubiquitous corporate domination. Drawing on identity performance theories, material culture theories related to gender, class, and migration, and theories of the built environment, I examine how women established identities based in and reinforced by material culture and spatial organization

Drawing on archaeologically recovered material culture, oral histories, archival research, and architectural data, I demonstrate the ways in which working class women used cultural norms to elevate themselves and their status within their communities. Women were able to balance their needs with ubiquitous gender oppression within working class industrial society by mastering the tasks assigned to women – responsibilities as mothers, familial ministers, household managers, and feminine matrons – and using those positions to pursue what they needed for their own survival. These identities were further negotiated and enforced by the built environment. By examining household decorations, house floorplans, house lot spatial organization, and company town layouts as a whole, I discuss how workers and company town architects used the built environment to exert and subvert ideas of power, control, and self-determination.

This research reveals that the process of identity formation amongst working class women in the anthracite region was a careful and complicated conversation between national level cultural influencers, industrial directors, and company town social trends. As women sought out and exploited new ways of exercising discretion over their otherwise structurally circumscribed situations, they gained social leverage and influence that has been consistently ignored in modern retellings of their lives.

Creating Anthracite Women: The Roles of Architecture and Material Culture in Identity  
Formation in Pennsylvania Anthracite Company Towns, 1854-1940.

By

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

I'll give you the amount that I make. Between 7-8 pounds of ground meat. Two cans of tomato paste, the 18 ounce cans are what I use now. And a can of puree. And a can of sauce. Now I'll make my meatballs, I'll say seven pounds of ground meat. Now I go by the fist. 7-8 fists of bread crumbs. 6 fists of roman cheese. Garlic. Oh, usually you have a small dish and you chop it up and I'll use half of that for the sauce and half for the meatballs. You know, small dish? And black pepper. And parsley. And salt. Well I don't know how much salt to use. To taste. And you fry them. Then you fry your sauce. Now your sauce, you take half of the garlic that you have in the dish, half of that. And parsley. Oh, a couple tablespoons of parsley, I guess. Then you fry that a little bit. Then you put the tomato paste in there and you fry it real good until it gets dark. Then you take your puree and your sauce and you get your pot and you put it in a pot and you add water. And let that come to a boil. And then you put a fist or two of roman cheese in that sauce. You fry your meat balls. Put them in a pot and add enough water to cover them. Let them simmer for two to three hours. I know some lady used to put them in the sauce without frying them but I never did that. So you fry them and then put them in a pot and cover them with water and it has to boil so that sauce gets thick like. And that's it!

### Introduction

This dissertation began with a conversation about spaghetti and meatball recipes. While working on the Lattimer Archaeology Project's 2013 archaeological excavation in Pardeesville, Pennsylvania, I became friends with the then-89 year old Italian-American woman who had lived on the lot we were excavating in the 1940s or 1950s. While talking with her one morning about her spaghetti and meatballs recipe, she casually asked me if I had seen the Duplan Building, the former textile factory in downtown Hazleton. When I said yes, she replied wistfully, "Forty-seven steps up and forty-seven steps down. I counted. Every day for fifty years." In that moment, I realized that although women in the anthracite region are often portrayed as wives and mothers, the duties associated with those identities stretched far beyond our contemporary associations with those titles.

Women, including the one with whom I spoke with, had spent their entire lives balancing their needs with various forms of oppression inherent within industrial society. The unique confluence of gender, class, and ethnic identities that women in the anthracite region embodied were affected in different ways by the nature of the industrial environment. This dissertation aims to illuminate how different aspects of these environments shaped women's identities at home.

Women in the anthracite region raised subsistence gardens as well as children; they were miners' wives, but they were also boarders' landlords, factories' labor, and families' financial accountants. Women were integral to the success of company towns – both from a labor and a corporate perspective – yet their contributions are often under represented within academic literature that overlooks their roles, responsibilities, and contributions within the social and physical environments of the company town. Women in anthracite company towns balanced and negotiated various identities as women, as immigrants or the children of immigrants, and as members of the working classes, all while internalizing and interpreting signals from the cultural context around them. This

dissertation explores the experiences of women living in two anthracite company towns in the Eastern Middle Coal Fields of Pennsylvania (Figure 1), and the ways that

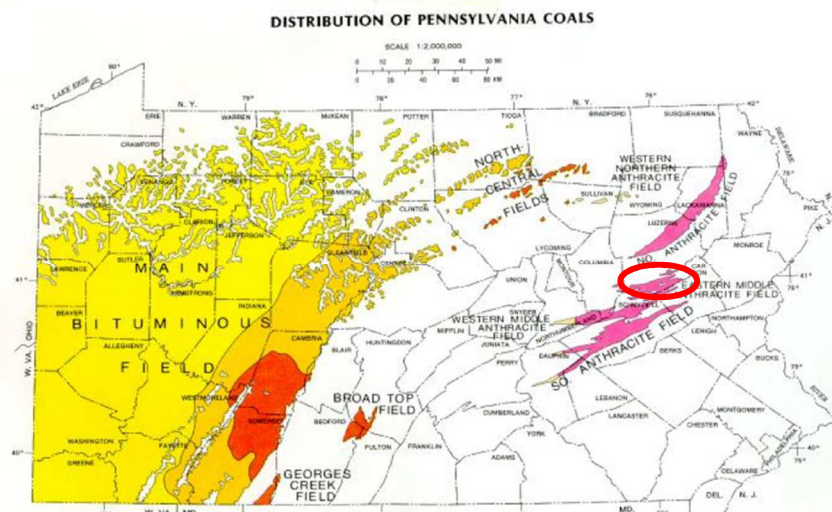


Figure 1. Map of Pennsylvania anthracite region with Eastern Middle Anthracite Field indicated with red circle.

these experiences impacted their sense of identity, by examining their lives from the dual perspectives of material culture and the built environment.

The anthracite region provides a unique industrial and geographic context from which to study the phenomenon of identity formation. The social and cultural extremes of the communities in the region are staggering. The region is rural at the same time that it is highly connected to major cultural centers on the East Coast. It is industrial and unforgiving at the same time that it is where thousands of immigrants came to build a new life. A substantial portion of the population were immigrants, yet xenophobia was rampant. Within this confusing and contradictory environment, industrialists established a coherent and efficient method of labor exploitation and oppression. Coal and, later, textile companies took advantage of lax enforcement of labor regulations and little cultural regard for the welfare of migrants in order to maximize profits. Dangerous working conditions, low pay, and an artificially inflated labor supply ensured that migrants' lives and livelihoods were constantly at risk, but also that workers had few avenues for recourse. Within this labor situation, working families found new and innovative ways to seek personal and social uplift despite widespread discrimination and oppression.

### *Anthracite Heritage Project*

The Anthracite Heritage Project (drawing on its predecessor, the Lattimer Archaeology Project) was established in 2009 in order to “examine the rise and fall of the anthracite coal industry, and address issues related to inequalities in the community, past and

present” in the anthracite region of Northeastern Pennsylvania, specifically in the general vicinity of Hazleton in Luzerne County (Shackel 2018a:1, Figure 2).



Figure 2. Map of Pennsylvania with the approximate location of Hazleton designated by a red star.

This dissertation draws on architectural and archaeological investigations executed at the towns of Pardeesville and Eckley. These two towns and their respective histories will be discussed in more detail later, but observing their geographical locations are important. The two towns are located less than six miles from each other and would have been involved in the same regional social trends and pressures (Figure 3).

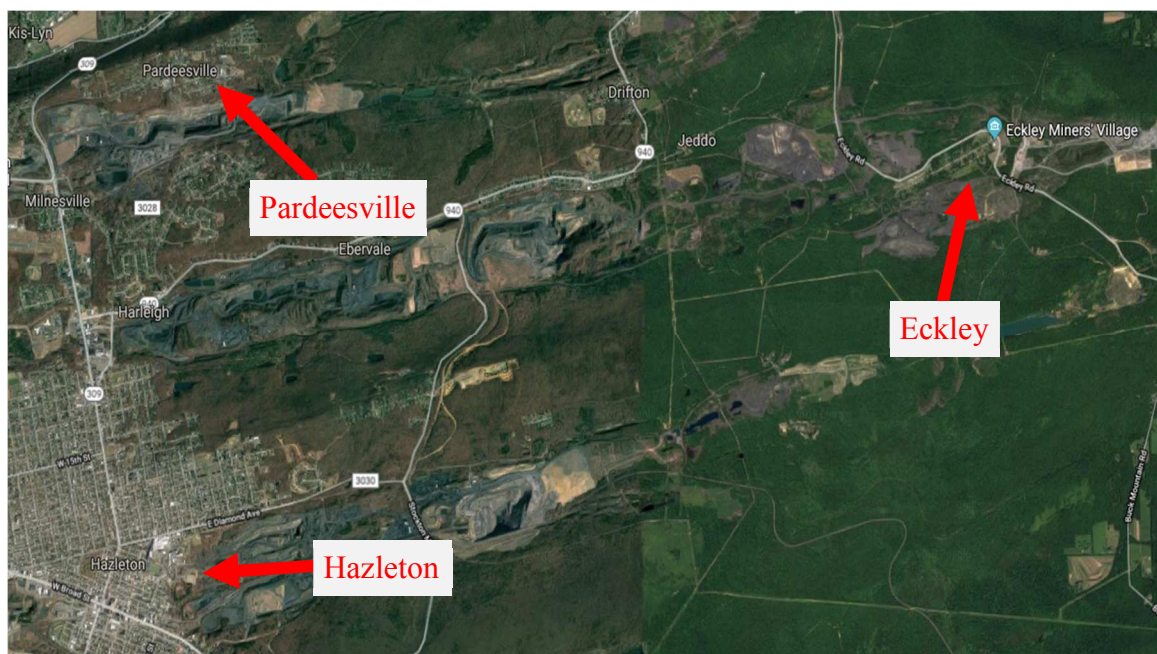


Figure 3. 2017 Aerial of the greater Hazleton area, with Pardeesville and Eckley identified.



The social and industrial life of the region was dominated by nearby Hazleton, where many of the Eastern Middle Coal Field coal mine operators owned mansions and offices. Therefore, although this dissertation will discuss these towns as separate entities, which they were, they are also both products of the social and technological trends of their day and therefore strong candidates for comparison.

Although the Project's archaeological investigations began with a metal detecting survey of the site of the 1897 Lattimer Massacre, the focus of the archaeology quickly shifted to the former locations of the homes of workers who experienced the social and labor abuses that led to the massacre. During the summer of 2012, a University of Maryland's Archaeological Field School under the direction of Dr. Paul Shackel and Michael Roller investigated a former shanty enclave in Lattimer No. 1 (today known as Lattimer Mines). The following year, an archaeological field school was held that investigated the location of the former shanty enclave in Lattimer No. 2, which today is known as Pardeesville. Returning to Pardeesville in 2014, the focus of the archaeological field school shifted to investigate the lives of workers who lived in company built and owned houses (Figure 4). Dr.

Paul Shackel, myself, and Justin Uehlein investigated two households. During the summers of 2015 and 2016, the field schools were held at a different coal company town, the town of Eckley, under the



Figure 4. 2014 Pardeesville field crew

direction of Dr. Paul Shackel and myself. Both of the properties investigated at Eckley were company owned and built double houses that were typically rented to the newest arrived migrants in the town (Shackel 2018a:2). This dissertation draws on the finds of the 2014, 2015, and 2016 excavations.

Paul Shackel, in particular, has spearheaded academic efforts into developing a greater understanding of the history of the anthracite region through anthropology (Shackel 2017), archaeology (Shackel and Roller 2012), historic preservation (Cools and Boyle 2018), and heritage studies (Shackel 2018a). His work in the region has particularly focused on highlighting and addressing the historic and contemporary treatment of migrants. Shackel (2013) has both encouraged archaeologists as well as storytellers, in general, to be cognizant of the potential for perpetuating power relations from the past in the present through unquestioningly repeating dominant narratives in their interpretations. In the case of the Lattimer Massacre, which occurred in the anthracite region, Michael Roller, who has worked extensively with Shackel on this research project, advocates a perspective that re-contextualizes the experiences of the historic migrant populations (2013). Other work by Shackel (2013) and Shackel and Roller (2012) has adopted a contextualized narrative approach in the case of the Lattimer Massacre and demonstrated the ways that the past can be used to frame and understand social issues, including labor exploitation, xenophobia, and racism, in the present.

Shackel has continued to increase the value of archaeology as a means for understanding the history of migrants in anthracite company towns by initializing the Summer Mentorship Program, which pairs local white and Latino high school students with undergraduate and graduate students participating in the University of Maryland

Archaeological Field Methods course. In the execution of this project, Shackel has developed partnerships with the local public schools as well as the Hazleton Integration Project, a privately-funded non-profit organization that provides academic and recreational opportunities for white and Latino students in the Hazleton area. Shackel's work in the region focusing on the exploitation of the working community by coal companies and the long-term impacts of that treatment has continued to grow (see Shackel 2018a). Through the Anthracite Heritage Project, Shackel has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to using the past as a tool for the betterment of the future in the Pennsylvania anthracite region (see Shackel and Westmont 2016).

The work done by the AHP has brought academic and non-academic attention to the historic (and modern) plight of migrants in the region (see Shackel and Roller 2012; Roller 2015; Shackel 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018a; Shackel and Westmont 2016; Westmont 2017; Jackson 2013, 2015). In particular, the project has highlighted the systematic patterns of labor abuses, xenophobia and ethnic discrimination, and class conflict brought about by the social structure of the communities. However, while the implication of workers' identities related to class and ethnic statuses have been explored, no work done as part of the Anthracite Heritage Project has explicitly addressed the topic of gender. A broader review of literature on gender in the anthracite region reveals that, although scholarship has explored women workers in textile mills (Stepenoff 1999, Deasy and Griess 1965, Wolensky et al. 2002), women's fertility (Haines 1977, 1978), and women's traditional roles such as caregivers (Weaver 2011), it is more common for books on the history of the region to present women and women's roles in anthracite company towns as secondary to the actions and responsibilities of men or simply not at all (see Aurand



2003, Palladino 2006, Leonard 2005, Richards 2007, Beniquez 2017, Keil and Keil 2014, Shackel 2018b). This dissertation aims to address this gap in the literature on working people in the anthracite region through a material culture and architectural study of their domestic lives.

### Research Questions

This dissertation aims to answer one primary question: **How did the process of identity formation occur for migrant, working class women in anthracite company towns?** In order to address this question, I have two related sub-questions: 1. How did women in anthracite company towns use material culture to represent identity?; and, 2. What role do domestic environments play in women's identity formation and representation?

Research on the working class has frequently adopted a birds-eye perspective that relies on corporate, investigatory, or other outside documentation of workers' lives – not accounts from the workers themselves (e.g., Matkosky and Curra 2002, Eisler 1977)<sup>1</sup>.

Early efforts aimed at better understanding company town life utilized first person accounts and oral histories to combat the stereotypes presented in popular culture, although this approach has no way to account for romanticization and nostalgia (e.g. Shifflett 1991). More recent research on the working class has looked at piecemeal aspects of identity in an attempt to ascertain larger patterns in settlement trends and lifeways. Research evaluating gender in labor contexts (Stepenoff 1999; Dublin 1979),

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<sup>1</sup> Labor history is one of the few disciplines that has actively engaged with oral history. In the 1980s, historians interested in challenging the 'history from above' model began using oral histories of the working class as a way to redefine the experiences of the everyday. For more information, see Sangster 2013, Palmer 1988, Abella 1973.

ethnicity in labor contexts (Greenwood 2005), and religion in labor contexts (Pasture 2002) have revealed information about the ways that aspects of identity can shape how individual workers define their place in the world. However, the pitfalls of foregrounding only one aspect of identity in a very complex and fluid population have been documented (see Cowie 2011). In order to properly understand the creation of identity, one must understand all of the social and cultural forces that act upon people in the community, including the pressures that ideologies such as the Cult of Domesticity, Republican Motherhood, and consumerism exerted on people. It is only by understanding how these influences intersected with different aspects of women's own identities that a better picture of the lives of migrant, working class women in anthracite company towns can be parsed.

Several scholars have successfully addressed multiple aspects of identity within the working class population of a site. These include Wood (2002b), Mulrooney (2002), and Methenny (2007), all of whom worked in company town contexts. Their works go beyond generalizations of workers and their motivations to present interpretations of the intersecting aspects of gender, ethnicity, landscape, and labor, among others.

The built environment of company towns has been extensively researched, but not with reference to its effects on the identity formation of the working class (e.g., Shifflett 1991, Crawford 1995). De Certeau's work on consumers' individualized experience of a place reveals that, while the company designed the corporate landscape to instill specific ideas, the workers who traversed the landscape were free to do so in ways that contradict the planner's original goals (1984:93). Building from De Certeau's observations on the layered experiences of landscapes, Upton (1988) argues that understanding landscapes in

terms of their social and ethnic stratification is the only way to fully understand life in historic contexts. Although Upton's research focuses on 18th century contexts, his overall approach of evaluating built spaces through the social relations they create, reinforce, and reproduce is extremely relevant in for this project. In the 18th and 19th centuries, builders used architecture to "create a landscape meant to be experienced dynamically, one that depended on memory and the rapid dissolution and reformulation of individual experiences to establish its meaning" (Upton 1988: 358).

In a similar vein, Wenger has studied how changing household social rituals are reflected in floor plans over time. Wenger outlines how owner's ideas of rooms' function (both literally and socially) and use of space changed with prevailing cultural ideas of the time (1989:149). Wenger's microanalysis approach distills his interpretations to a single room, which he observes, dissects, and monitors through time in light of social attitudes around class, culture, and the role of the individual. It is this vein of research – a focus on the roles of individual spaces and their transformation of meaning – that this dissertation intends to recreate in the case of company-owned double houses.

Bringing together de Certeau's ideas of strategies and tactics with Upton's focus on social and ethnic stratifications as a unit of difference when understanding how groups experience and use a landscape differently will enable me to evaluate how the various groups within Eckley – groups ranging from Eastern European versus Irish to lower management versus laborers to mine owners versus employees – interpreted their place on the landscape and acted on that information, accordingly. While the landscape as a whole served as a proving ground for worker identity as they negotiated their place physically and socially within the town, the ways in which the company house lots were

laid out also provides another level of interpretation (e.g. Wood 2002a). Wenger's example of using individual rooms to extrapolate social behaviors and track how societal change shifted the meanings of those rooms and their accompanying norms provides a perfect framework by which to understand the use of space within the company house over time vis-à-vis massive social changes. While people's lives are based in the home, their constant interactions with the space and the inherent meanings of those places further shaped how people defined themselves within their reality.

Although social analysis is frequently a side note in discussions of company town layout (Bennett 1990; Christian 1978), some scholars have used it to discuss broader societal occurrences. Hoagland (2010) uses the social meanings of buildings and company-owned land in copper mining towns in Northern Michigan to discuss how the worker-management relationship could be read from the built environment; however, even this work fails to recognize that this influence goes both ways, with buildings reifying workers' ideas of themselves as much as workers reify the meaning of the building.

Beaudry's work at the Boott Mills complex in Lowell, Massachusetts, provides an excellent example of the opportunities that can arise from a full understanding of the relationship between the corporate-built environment and the worker-experienced landscape. She observes that, "seemingly mundane aspects of urban life ... reflect a great deal about the status of individuals and neighborhoods" (Beaudry 1989:28; Honerkamp and Council 1984). Beaudry's use of landscape as a point of analysis demonstrated how corporate paternalism within the town waned – a factor that could then be used to explore how the worker-management relationship changed. Although Beaudry did not increase

her scale of analysis of the built environment to explore how structures at the house lot level affected individuals' sense of identity, Mulrooney's work at Hagley, a company town operated by the DuPont family in Delaware, succeeded in that endeavor. Mulrooney (2002) used material culture within the house and spatial use within the house lot to evaluate how families defined their priorities and reflected their sense of identity in their organization of the spaces under their control. A combination of these approaches – one that captures both the landscape level and the household level – will be utilized at Eckley to discuss how the working class shaped and were shaped by the places and spaces around them.

### Methodology

This dissertation is crafted from a multi-sourced data set that relies on a variety of methods and approaches to draw robust conclusions. The most heavily referenced sources include archival data and primary source documents, oral histories, archaeological materials, and maps. Each of these items will now be discussed in turn.

#### *A Note on Archaeologically and Architecturally Derived Knowledge*

Archaeology is an imperfect science, but it is that imperfection that allows for the advancement of knowledge beyond that offered by history books or primary sources. When archaeological investigations focus on marginalized populations, many of the resulting interpretations can best be described as informed, educated guesses. Because marginalized populations are frequently not the authors of their own histories,

archaeologists have few means of verifying whether our interpretations are fully accurate or not. This is similarly the case in instances where social intentions are interpreted from architectural designs and spatial organization in vernacular structures. In order to bridge this gap, archaeologists and historic preservationists concerned with social issues in the past often rely on ethnographic equivalents, contemporary outside observations, and other forms of secondary sources to help bolster the evidence and arguments for a specific interpretation.

For instance, although no archaeological materials definitively state that women were the heads of their households in the anthracite region, Jay Hambidge's observations of women in anthracite company towns at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century include phrases such as "forcible", "she is a queen", and "[she] rules things with a high hand" (1898:825). These historical documents are then interpreted vis-à-vis the information gathered from oral histories, such as the statement by one individual that her great grandmother was the real head of the family (PD, interview 5 July 2018). These other forms of information provide a context within which to interpret changes in household organization, management, and operation. These types of multi-sourced interpretations are also the basis of many of the architectural discussions, including women's role in dictating changes in their homes' interiors.

#### *Archival Data and Primary Source Documents*

Archival data and primary sources are especially important sources of information for historical archaeologists because they can provide different perspectives from that available in archaeology or more fine-grained information. In this work, I drew on

company documents from Sharpe, Weiss, and Company that operated at Eckley during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as on national archival data, including census records. These records were further enhanced by access to a variety of contemporary primary source materials, including women's home and etiquette manuals, state and national reports on the anthracite industry, and historical newspaper articles.

### *Oral Histories*

Oral histories were collected from local volunteers with personal connections to the anthracite region between summer 2013 and summer 2018. While some oral histories were specifically sought because of the informant's connections to the archaeological sites or because of their specific experiences, other oral histories were collected in order to give broader background knowledge on the area historically. All oral histories were collected from individuals who either grew up in an Eastern Middle Coal Field anthracite company town or who had extensive and long-term experience in the area. Oral histories were collected in singular as well as in group settings depending on the desire of the informant(s). Participants gave positive assent to being recorded and were permitted to review quotes derived from their interviews prior to the dissertation being finalized.

Informants ranged in age from approximately 30 to 90. Therefore, although some individuals would have grown up in Eckley or Pardeesville during the period of focus for this dissertation, the majority of informants had little to no first-hand experiences with the towns during the period in which they are discussed here. Interviews were conducted by myself in individuals' homes. Oral histories are exempt from Institutional Review Board procedures (National Coalition for History 2017), although University of Maryland

Institutional Review Board permission was sought and granted for interviews carried out in 2013 and 2014 as part of my Masters of Applied Anthropology internship project. In a few limited places, I rely on interviews conducted by Michael Roller, in which I cite Roller's published transcription of those interviews. In this dissertation, informants are identified by initials to protect anonymity. All interviews conducted by myself are kept on file with the Anthracite Heritage Project at the University of Maryland.

To account for the gap in first-hand experience with life in the company towns during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, informants were asked to recount stories that their parents had told them about what the towns were like in the past. Although these responses subsequently had an implicit layer of bias because they represent portrayals of the past that have been curated and re-imagined by both the informant and the informant's parent or relative who originally shared the story, these stories continue to be our best insight to people's personal interpretations of company towns and life for workers in company towns. Rather than dismiss these rich sources of information, I have chosen to heavily scrutinize the information provided and include aspects of oral histories that I found applicable and believable. Rather than exclude stories because of this bias, I believe that these biases can serve as an even better indicator of working class identity because the stories are curated in such a way as to reify or reinforce certain aspects of identity but not others. These are culturally rich moments for identity research and proved to be extremely useful for this work.



### *Archaeological Materials*

The artifacts and material culture discussed in this dissertation were largely recovered during the course of archaeological investigations that took place during the summers of 2014, 2015, and 2016. These excavations are discussed in greater detail at the beginning of this chapter. Artifacts were recovered from excavations in the company towns and underwent preliminary processing and analysis during the field methods course. More strenuous and in-depth analysis was conducted in the archaeology laboratory in Woods Hall at the University of Maryland.

While archaeological materials can provide less filtered, more intimate glances into the lived experiences of the past, the specific context of this dissertation creates some hurdles not typically encountered in other historical archaeology projects. Unsurprisingly, the hurdles associated with analyzing the material culture of working class populations in the past are derivatives of the nature of working class and impoverished lifestyles that these populations continue to suffer today. Transient lifestyles dependent on the availability of work, informal living arrangements, and a pattern of falling out of view of mainstream society make these populations incredibly difficult to track over time. This fact is exponentially more frustrating in historical situations, where inadequate or variable record keeping (e.g. company records), records occurring at long time intervals (e.g. federal censuses), or sensitive records that cannot be viewed by researchers (e.g. Catholic church member records) stymie attempts to clearly define *who* is living in a particular house at any particular time. Although some families or individuals stay in residences for many years, others stay for only a few months before moving on for better opportunities

elsewhere. This fact makes definitive statements about the residents of certain houses or the owners are particular pieces of material culture almost impossible to make.

In the excavations at 217 Lower Street in Pardeesville, we know from census records that the same family stayed in that house for several decades. Because the house at 217 Lower Street was among the nicer houses that workers could rent, it follows that the family that was able to rent the house stayed there. However, the opposite is the case in the four residences excavated in Eckley. The company built this set of houses to be small and without amenities in order to be able to rent them cheaply to people who had small incomes. The movement of people through Eckley and statements from oral histories attest to the fact that families living on Back Street actively sought to *move elsewhere*, meaning that the houses on Back Street were never intended to be permanent residences, but rather transitional homes until better housing became available elsewhere in the town. This means these houses had a rapid turnover of tenants throughout their lives and not all of the houses' tenants are visible in the archival record. Given this reality, it is impossible to state with perfect certainty that items deposited in and around the houses on Back Street in Eckley belonged to a given family or individual. Additionally, because the federal census did not record house numbers in Eckley prior to 1920, it is impossible to know which family was living in which house even during the census. Broad patterns reveal the rough ethnic makeup of different areas of town, but the movement of the census taker amongst the houses is unknown and therefore the specific families remain a mystery. In short, I cannot conclusively link artifacts to specific residents in the houses at Eckley; however, I attempt to draw conclusions based on

broader patterns of consumption witnessed in these houses in order to make statements about the purchasing patterns of families living on Back Street.

It is also worthwhile to mention that although I discuss ethnic identity as a major factor throughout the dissertation, very few items of material culture in general have explicit ethnic links. Only one artifact, a saint pendant in Italian, from the five households examined in this study was identifiably ethnic. This is not necessarily because people did not have ethnic identities, but rather because the majority of everyday material culture does not have obvious ethnic links (writing in a foreign language on the object being an exception). It is also difficult to identify broader consumption patterns by ethnicity for two reasons: firstly, the issue stated above where I cannot conclusively link items to specific individuals, and secondly, because technological change was so rapid at this time, it is impossible to say whether one ethnic group's consumption patterns are due to their ethnicity or due to the availability of items to purchase. For example, Irish households living on Back Street did not feature objects made from synthetic or semi-synthetic materials, although Eastern European households living on Back Street did; in this case, the differences in consumption patterns are due to the fact that synthetic and semi-synthetic objects were not available for the Irish to purchase because they had not become widespread, but were available by the time that the Eastern European families moved in to the houses. Because of these types of temporal and technological gaps between different ethnicities, I do not attempt to characterize consumption habits of one ethnic group compared to another.

### *Maps and Photographs*

A variety of maps related to both Eckley and Pardeesville were analyzed in order to understand how the landscape and the built environments of the two towns had changed over time. These maps were collected from a variety of places, including the 1873 D.G. Beers Atlas of Pennsylvania, the Sharpe, Weiss, and Company Papers Collection at the National Museum of American History, and the Lattimer Coal Company Archives that are held privately in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Additional data on the landscape was identified through historical aerial photographs of the region which are held and curated by the Penn State University Library system.

Many families were kind enough to provide access to old photographs in their personal collections. Photographs provided by the Delazio family, Maurice Delorenzo, Al Falatko, and the Yanac family were especially helpful for providing historical context for what life was like in anthracite company towns in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These images provide information about both the social and the architectural aspects of history, including capturing gendered roles and the ways people chose to present themselves in addition to information about the layout of the town and the appearance of domestic and industrial spaces.

However, it is vital to remember that both maps and photographs are staged interpretations of reality. Maps feature the inherent biases of the individual creating the map, including the possibility of overlooking or intentionally excluding spaces or structures in order to give an impression or convey a point. Similarly, photographs are often staged representations of a moment in time that are intended to reinforce a specific idea or representative of the bias of the photograph in what they deemed important

enough to photograph. That is to say that candid images of the mundane, the average, or the unremarkable aspects of working class lives were often not recorded through film for future generations.

### *Architectural Data*

The final form of data being used for this analysis is architectural data derived from personal observations and measurements of extant company houses at Eckley and Pardeesville. This data includes measured drawings, documenting the architectural history (including modifications and the construction and demolition of additions) of the building over time, and reviewing building methods and materials. This work was carried out by myself while in the field as well as part of a 2017 summer internship with the Historic American Building survey.

Architectural data is imperative for understanding how buildings have been modified and for what purpose since their construction. Given the prominent role that women played in the control, maintenance, and decision-making at home, I read many of the decorative changes made to the built structure as being done with women's input or possibly at the direction of women. Because these changes were often done to accommodate changing fashions rather than for necessity (e.g. hanging wallpaper, adding closets, enclosing ceilings), I argue that these changes can be read as expressions of women's (possibly aspirational) class identity. Furthermore, because these fashions were often based in descriptions of 'American' homes, women's willingness to abide by these fashions could indicate a desire to have her home be seen as 'American'.

### *A Note on Terms*

Although the work described by this dissertation is inherently international due to its focus on migrants, the scope of reference addresses little outside of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. Therefore, although scholars in migration studies generally prefer to use ‘United States’ instead of ‘America’ when referring to the country in order to prevent confusion with Central or South America, because I do not refer to Central or South America at all, I will refer to people born or living in the United States as ‘Americans’.

### *Periods of Study*

This dissertation covers a wide timespan in which major social and technological changes took place. Breaking down the 86-year period between 1854 and 1940 into smaller, more manageable eras can help to classify the different phases of change. The periods mentioned here are only loosely based on national and international cultural phases and are meant to convey the local expression of those cultural phases within the anthracite region. Very broadly, the different eras within this period can be described as the end of the Victorian Era, the Gilded Era, the Progressive Era, and the dawn of Modernity.

The end of the Victorian Era was characterized in the anthracite region broadly by a continued reliance on older conceptions of femininity and class-based distinctions. As reflected in material culture and the types of consumption being engaged in, I suggest that this era lasts in Eckley from roughly its founding in 1854 until the 1870s. Consumption during this era was intended to convey status rather than to create status. Although industrialization had arrived in the Pennsylvania anthracite region and was

responsible for the rapid settlement and construction of the company towns that migrants found themselves drawn to, the social structure still relied on older, early 19<sup>th</sup> century conceptions of propriety and women's 'place'.

The last vestiges of the Victorian Era were replaced by the Gilded Era, lasting from roughly the 1880s until the 1910s. During this era, mass consumption begins to play a more important role in the lives of anthracite families, and laws forbidding the continued operation of the company store model enable families to increasingly engage with new markets in new ways. However, this is also the beginning of modern advertising and the arrival of the first plastics. Working class women in the anthracite region, most especially those who had been unable to engage with consumer signaling before the introduction of new, cheap materials, take advantage of the new-found opportunity to (appear to) obtain consumptive parity with their middle and upper class compatriots. Although many of the social expectations for women persist from the Victoria Era, the Gilded Era provides women with the opportunity to express their identities in new ways through new technologies.

The Progressive Era in the anthracite region, lasting roughly from the 1910s to the 1930s, illustrates a greater focus nationally on the working classes. However, Progressive Era reformers were primarily concerned with forcing working class to conform to middle class expectations through a combination of enticements, shaming, and legislation (Cohen 1980; Lucas 1995). Women in the anthracite region, however, were able to use the increasing availability and decreasing prices of faux status items to consume their ways into identities as aspirational members of the middle classes. This transition in consumption habits is further encouraged by a widespread adoption of Bernays'

advertising methods. Although material culture from this era loosely resembles items that are recognizable today, it is only with the dawn of the Modern Era that this change is cemented.

The dawn of the Modern Era in the anthracite region occurs between the 1930s and 1940 for the purposes of this dissertation. In this period, aspirational identity consumption explodes and purchasing habits that are strikingly reminiscent to those engaged in today take hold. The material culture recovered archaeologically and the architectural changes dating to this period reinforce the arrival of anthracite region families into the modern economy.

### *Theoretical Frameworks*

This dissertation seeks to understand how material culture, social ideologies, and the built environment were involved in the identity formation of women in anthracite company towns. To achieve this, I will first outline what identity is, and how it can be affected, negotiated, and deployed in different contexts. I will then move into a more detailed explanation of the theories that will guide my discussion of the three aspects of identity that this dissertation focuses on, including how these identities are mutually constituted through material objects, before discussing how the built environment can also impact identity.

### *Identity Formation*

In order to evaluate the ways that immigrants in coal company towns crafted identities amidst social and corporate pressures, a definition of identity and how it manifests in



material culture and behaviors must first be introduced. Identity as a theoretical concept has long been recognized as a field of study (Cote 2009; Hall 1996; Bauman 2001); however, only in the last two decades has identity been recognized as the outcome of both representation *and* performance (Ashworth 2007; Anico and Peralta 2009). ‘Identity’ refers to “a narrative in which we locate ourselves and are located in,” both in terms of what we are and what we are not (Anico and Peralta 2009:1). Therefore, identity requires exclusion. What, and who, are categorized as inside or outside an identity is based on the narrative that serves as the foundation to that identity. This narrative is not created by the subscribed themselves, but, rather, is the result of a series of selections, rejections, and curations of pieces of the past completed by various actors throughout history. This curation is not a single event, but instead an on-going process that is intrinsic to collective agency. Additionally, identity is not only defined by its cohesion within the group, but also through interaction with an identity other than itself; the identities are solidified by their differences (e.g. Barth 1969). Because the narratives that underpin identity are continuously engaged with and affected by external power relations, this contestation process can be seen as political. These narratives, and their corresponding identities, are conveyed through both representations and performances that dictate “not only who we are but also who we will come to be” (Anico and Peralta 2009:1; Somers 1994).

‘Performance’ refers to the ways in which individuals embody the socially dictated qualities related to a given identity. These qualities can range from behaviors, to belief systems, to ways of dress. The performance of identity can also be understood as “the public expression of identity-relevant norms,” which act to both affirm and

strengthen individual and group identities through the process of identity consolidation and to persuade others to adopt specific behaviors (Klein et al. 2007:28). Performance provides the reification of the narrative that individuals identify themselves as apart of and in which others identify them. To summarize, identities are based on politicized narratives that are derived from curated visions of the past that are reified through representation and performance and serve as both inclusionary and exclusionary forces within social relations. Finally, it is important to note that a single person can simultaneously occupy multiple, at times contradictory, identities and that these identities can shift by context and throughout a lifetime.

Identity theory consists of two connected but entirely separate ideas: the self-referential (self-identity) and the group identity (Barnard and Spencer 1996:292). Following Diaz-Andreu and Lucy's work, my approach examines identity as the way "we perceive ourselves, and others see us, as belonging to certain groups and not others" (2005:1). For my purposes, I will be focusing on groups ranging from national, ethnic, and racial categories to gendered, religious, and class designations, although hundreds of other categories of identity exist outside the purview of my project. It is important to note that the boundaries created to include some and exclude other individuals are "socio-culturally conditioned phenomenon" (Golubović 2011:27). Barth's work on ethnic identity found that, contrary to popular perceptions, "distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite the contrary often the very foundations on which embracing social systems are built" (1969:10). In other words, group (or collective) identities are culturally established categories that rely on interactions with a non-group populace to strengthen their definitions of inclusion and

exclusion. My work with identity and landscape focuses on the establishment of “collective identities and the role of the individual within them” in order to provide a better understanding of how the built environment shaped workers’ subscriptions to certain identities (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005:1).

Examination of identity becomes important when the intersections of multiple identities (each with different access, or lack thereof, to structures of power) are considered. Intersectionality emerged as a methodological answer to the critique that identity politics failed to recognize intragroup differences when examining the experiences of individuals and, therefore, unintentionally obscured power hierarchies based within other aspects of identity (Crenshaw 1991:1242). Intersectionality seeks to understand how multiple types of identity converge to shape individuals’ experiences under a series of contradictory but intertwined power hierarchies. When used to understand individuals and communities in the past, intersectionality provides a methodology that “exposes how women [and] men ... are shaped by ideological systems of power, economics and politics” (Bolles 2014:3). By using an intersectional methodology that incorporates a gendered lens, the knowledge produced through this work can begin to address “marginality and power differentials” that exist within and between gender groups (Davis and Craven 2016:11). Furthermore, archaeology provides an excellent approach through which to address these issues relating to complex and shifting power dynamics. Material culture, in particular, is important for being able to expose and dissect the subtleties of resistance that exist within a habitus of daily life (Battle-Baptiste 2011:41). Archaeological material culture provides a richer body of evidence from which to evaluate the ways that identities were produced, reproduced, and

negotiated between members of the household as well as between the individual and society. Intersectionality provides the nuance to be able to discuss the ways that multiple intersections of privilege and oppression work together to shape individual identity.

To understand the impacts of people in a society, the multiplicity of their roles within that society must be evaluated together. Although scholars have critiqued “both the strict structural approach and the return to houses [as] the ‘key’ to past household behavior,” (Brandon and Barile 2004:5), I believe that integrating archaeological and architectural data can provide perspectives greater than the sum of their parts.

Intersectionality theory evaluates the structural, political, and representational overlaps that aspects of identity, including gender, degree of assimilation, and class, entail. By understanding the ways that combinations of identities amplify or diminish experiences of oppression, privilege, success, social mobility, and so on, a better and more thorough understanding of the meanings within their individual experiences can be attained (Crenshaw 1991).

### *Material Culture Theories*

Three theories that my intersectionality approach will draw from in order to understand migrant identity formation through the consumption of material culture are migrant settlement theories, class theories, and feminist theories. The roots of migrant settlement theories lie in Gordon’s seminal 1964 publication, *Assimilation in American Life*. In it, he identifies seven measures of assimilation that occur when one group encounters another. While Gordon’s original theory served as a base from which new scholars have dramatically expanded, adapted, and re-defined key aspects of his approach for

understanding assimilation into American society (c.f., Omi and Winant 2014, Alba and Nee 2009), his basic approach still holds value for understanding individual accounts of assimilation but is less useful for understanding the larger social processes due to its focus on individual-level characteristics (see Gans 1982, Portes and Rumbaut 2006). One of the recent directions that migrant settlement theories have taken is into the ways that migration transforms communities and households and the lives of individuals who live within them. Work by Boehm (2008) and others has looked deeply at the ways that migration affects other aspects of life, including gender roles, labor and identity of both the individuals who migrated and those intimately connected to them. Others have noted the variety of factors that also shape migrants' inclusion into their new communities, including citizenship rights (Cohen 1994; Robinson 1986), language skill and employment (Bloch 2002), the circumstances of migration (Al-Rasheed 1994), and the presence/absence of social networks (Robinson 1993). Recognizing the impact and differential experiences of different migrant groups living in the anthracite region according to these variables serves as a vital part of this project because it helps identify the ways that migration and settlement change people's understandings of themselves and acts to shape their identity in their new social and economic contexts.

While migrant settlement theories explore the impacts of geographical change on individuals, families, and their social networks, gender theories focus on confronting the implicit gender biases in historical research by shifting the ways that gender research is conducted. Gender theory calls for scholars to better understand the implications of a power system based in the social construction of gender and to make interpretations accordingly (Hennessy 2012; Cott 1987; Bryson 2016). Researchers have identified the

ways that gender is systematically biased in historical representation, including the tendency for research questions to focus on ‘masculine’ activities as a societal norm (Little 1994; Gero 1994a, 1994b; Gifford-Gonzales 1997, Sterling 2015), for feminine gender roles to be ignored or dismissed (Hamilton et al. 2007, Nelson 2004), and for the supposed superiority of one gender over another to not be questioned (Coates 2016; Shackel 2001; Conkey and Spector 1984).

At its core, feminist theory is about power. Feminist theory explores how culturally created power differences divided along gendered lines serve to oppress some while benefitting others. The field seeks to illuminate these structures, increase awareness, and ultimately succeed in dismantling the inherently sexist cultural norms in our everyday lives (Moore 2006). When looking at gender and identity in the past, an emphasis on using reflexivity and critical thought when addressing issues of gender helps illuminate historical power hierarchies and avoid modern interpretation biases due to those hierarchies. Feminist theory recognizes that an individual’s relationship to the broader power structure is central for understanding that person’s actions and motivations (Nelson 2004). Building from this observation, feminist theory emphasizes the vast array of differences not only between women and men, but within women as a group as different individuals devised their own methods of traversing these power dynamics. By identifying the importance of diversity within populations of women, one can begin to look at the ways in which individual choice gives way to larger questions of agency that cannot be captured through generalizations (Lamphere et al 1993). This is especially true considering that ‘women’, much like gender and all forms of identity, is not tangible, but is instead a series of constitutive actions.

Although feminism focuses on gender as a primary mode of identity, one cannot ignore or separate this aspect of identity from other identities that every woman holds – including race, ethnicity, geographic location, religion, class, and education.

Additionally, feminist theory suggests the need to understand gendered roles in relation to society as a whole as well as in relation to one another. Instead of focusing on working class women as the unit of measure, I will need to understand the culture, how power relations between genders in that society are created, maintained, and passed down, and then delve into the topic of women in society. Feminist theory has created a more nuanced perspective of the past by disregarding aggregates and stereotypes in favor of the richness of human experience.

Feminist and labor theorists have noted that traditional Marxist definitions of class fail to incorporate a view outside of the factory (e.g. Piess 2011; Kessler-Harris 1982). Traditional Marxist concepts of class are based on one's relationship to the means of production (Marx 1986[1891]). Thompson expanded on Marx's classical definition of class in an attempt to incorporate human agency, stating that, "classes are based on the differences in legitimate power association with certain positions ... Class is defined by men as they live their own history" (1963:11). Despite Thompson's attempt to integrate social aspects into his discussion of class, his tome, *The Making of the English Working Class*, does little to address these aspects of identity, including factors such as gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, race, family structure, and social standing (Mulrooney 1995). The identities of the working class are not forged solely in relation to their economic or job status. Mulrooney (1995) argues that by ignoring these additional aspects of identity that are centered in the home when assigning class status, designations

such as ‘working class’ become arbitrary and functionally useless. By moving beyond an emphasis on job and economic income, we can begin to better discuss aspects of identity – especially gender. Gender roles are cemented in the home and, as a social category, gender can only be understood in relation to other gender roles. Therefore, the opportunity to evaluate identity formation in the domestic context presents an ideal environment in which to understand how this aspect of identity is formed, manipulated, negotiated, and deployed in everyday contexts (Mulrooney 2002). This dissertation attempts to correct the imbalance created by using male-dominated activities (e.g., labor outside the home) to measure social class by implementing an analysis grounded in intersectionality theory and based in the domestic aspects of company town life as well as by addressing issues to class.

The critiques of class being too narrow in scale due to its focus on the factory can be addressed by shifting the focus of research to the home. Using the home as the center of analysis allows for a definition of class based in Bourdieu’s ideas of the interconnectedness of class, taste, and distinction. Bourdieu asserts that preferences and taste are largely dictated by the class into which a person was raised. He notes that “total, early, imperceptible learning, performed within the family from the earliest days of life and extended by scholastic learning which presupposes and completes it,” shapes, to a large extent, the class markers of ‘taste’ that a person will carry with them for the rest of their life (1984:66). The lessons received as children form the basis of their cultural capital, which are further transformed by that individual’s *habitus* (the “internalized form of the class condition and of the conditionings it entails” [Bourdieu 1984:101]), which are subsequently regulated by the field within which a person operates, to result in a person’s



unique practice. By utilizing this understanding of class, I can bring together taste (which is a social marker that is reinforced and naturalized into one's habitus) as seen in the archaeological record with the social pressures of the time to better understand how the communities at Eckley and Pardeesville as well as the individuals who lived there attempted to change or sustain a particular class identity.

### *Built Environment*

The role of architecture and the built environment in understanding identity has a rich and varied history in the academy. The roles played by each level of landscape within the built environment (the town plan, the house lot, and the house level) all bear different kinds of information. "To understand the social experience of architecture," writes Dell Upton, "requires us to account for the entire range of spatial divisions from the scale of furnishings to that of settlement patterns" (Upton 1984: 59). Yet the types of data that can be construed from each of these contexts provides their own unique perspective on the ways that people defined themselves and shaped their environments, in turn.

Gender, class, and ethnic identities are all affected by the ways that people interact with spaces, which is then internalized and subsequently shapes the ways that people understand themselves. Individuals' experience within a physical space shape how they perceive the politics of that place, and because gender, class, and ethnicity are identities that are inherently politically charged, understanding how these aspects of identity, in particular, were affected by place can provide important insights into understanding how company town life impacted residents' sense of self. Understanding the ways that spaces were turned into places, by whom, and for what purposes can better

our understanding of identity formation within company towns and provide a clearer picture of the social and cultural consequences of the built environment.

The social processes and categories within society are reflected in the places that people build (Upton 1986). The most obvious group identity to become visible on the built landscape is ethnicity, especially those of immigrants (Figure 5). Upton (1986:9) notes that “many immigrant ethnic groups did reproduce some of what they had known at home, because that was all they knew.” Although Upton is discussing ethnic-based architectural traditions in the U.S. context, and immigrants in coal towns were largely supplied with houses rather than being expected to build their own, it is likely that families organized the spaces they did have control over, such as the house and house lot, according to their ethnic (as well as class and gendered) experiences.<sup>2</sup> Migrants replicated their country of origins through “blend[ing] memory and experience in varying proportions” in their domestic context (1986:9). In particular, Upton notes that certain patterns of domestic spatial use appeared. Further, as times and generations changed, families continued to modify their homes and patterns of space in ways that reflected their increasingly hybrid identities as Americans and immigrants. It is logical that migrants constructed buildings in a way that reflected their ethnic traditions in their new homes – a way of literally shaping the world around them to reflect their personal identity. However, the relationship between identity and the built environment goes both ways, and architecture’s role in manipulating people’s sense of self and, ultimately, their identities

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<sup>2</sup> Pardeesville’s Italian village is an obvious exception to this. Examples of where companies extended ground rent options to immigrants meant that migrants had the opportunity to construct dwellings and settlements that more closely modeled what they had experienced in their countries of origin. I will discuss this particular topic more in depth later in the chapter.



Figure 5. Image of Lattimer No. 2 (later Pardeesville), date unknown. Migrants to the region used available materials to build landscapes that often reflected Old World traditional lifeways.

The homes, neighborhoods, and towns people inhabit – the places they live out their lives – affect how people think about and define themselves. Scholars have noted that “because the landscape is the stage for human action, it both reflects past activities and encodes the cultural landscape in which people’s views of the world are formed” (Yamin and Metheny 1996:xv). Places are not unbiased stages for action, but instead provide the physical context for how the relations between people are formed and evolve in conjunction with more traditional forms of context for identity formation, such as gender, class, and ethnicity (Wurst and Fitts 1999: 9; places and space reader). Identity arises as the joint product of memory, consciousness, and the “physical and societal structures and influence processes which constitute the social context” (Breakwell 1986 quoted in Qazim 2014:308). By its very nature, identity and identity formation are embedded within physical locations that have their own intended meanings. In the context of the company town, where architecture was designed specifically to elicit social responses, it is not surprising that residents’ identities were shaped by their environment. One way that the company was able to instill meanings into the landscape – meanings that workers later incorporated into their own sense of identity – was through the creation of places. As De Certeau notes, however, the struggle to control and define geographical locations had important repercussions for all involved.

Understanding the lived experiences of people within physical places relies on understanding the social meanings of those places; in other words, bricks, mortar, and clapboard do not, in themselves, create meaning, although they are important for providing the materiality within which meaning is endowed – it is the meaning that others affix to otherwise unremarkable locations that give places social value (whether positive

or negative). De Certeau (1984:117) uses the concepts of ‘space’ and ‘place’ to delineate this difference. Places are designed by planners. They are visible in photographs and maps. Places represent the landscape devoid of human intention or interaction. With the arrival of people, a place becomes actualized and is transformed into a space. Space requires “vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables” (1984:117). Places, as physical positions, are made stable through recording of knowledge about those places, while spaces are only created through the use and interpretation of people. As De Certeau states, “space is a practiced place” (1984:117). The ways that places are used by consumers creates spaces that can be aligned with their intended purpose, or vary dramatically from that purpose.

The example of the Lattimer Massacre illuminates the difference between place and space. The road to Lattimer itself held no particular purpose or intention beyond enabling circulation to the town. The road was a place with specific meanings imbued through its recordation. The arrival of striking workers in September of 1897, however, transformed that road from an avenue of commerce into a means of anti-commerce, whereby the production at Lattimer could be shuttered (Turner 2002:26). The road became a space through the presence of strikers and the sheriff’s posse, each with their own intended meaning for the road (for the strikers, the road represented a “public highway” that they had the legal right to traverse, while for the sheriff’s posse, the road represented the site of an impending riot and, when the strikers disobeyed his order to disperse, the road and its occupants became a threat to public safety) (Figure 6). The road itself did not inspire the strikers to feel more confident in their identities as U.S. residents



Figure 6. Image of striker miners on their way to Lattimer prior to the massacre, 1897. From the Pennsylvania archives.

with a right to peaceably assemble on the road as much as the location combined with the social circumstances did. In this instance, we see how physical locations can hold multiple, sometimes contradictory, meanings when they transition from places with the social intentions of planners and people

with power into spaces in which those intended meanings were evolved by the people who experienced them.<sup>3</sup>

De Certeau goes on to qualify that planners create places as a form of social context. Through the built environment, planners are able to instill desired behaviors, such as walking on sidewalks but not in landscaped areas. These methods of controlling the ways that people interact with their surroundings are what De Certeau refer to as ‘strategies’, which are rooted in knowledge and its apparatuses. The ways that people circumvent these designed strategies through the use of ‘tactics,’ such as walking through a landscaped area instead of using the sidewalk, which are instead rooted in time and opportunity. Repeated multiple times, tactics can turn otherwise anonymous places into spaces that incorporate social meanings. Although this series of actions demonstrates a

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<sup>3</sup> Taking the example of the Lattimer Massacre a step further, the erection of a monument at the site of the massacre and the tradition of holding Catholic mass at the site every September shows the ways that ‘place making’ is in action and the importance of physical places on identity as achieved through collective memory.

way that those without power can begin to exercise power, oftentimes the scale of the power differential is immutable.

The concepts of space, place, strategies, and tactics can be adapted for many purposes, but their use in understanding how the built environment affects identity is central to my argument here. The concept of ‘place identity,’ derived originally in psychology but since adopted by fields including architectural history, geography, and anthropology, is used to define the ways that place informs a person’s experiences, behaviors, and attitudes (Hayden 1995; Proshansky et al. 1983).<sup>4</sup> Place identity is intimately intertwined with ‘place making,’ in which people imbue spaces with meaning. Place making, both by the producer and the consumer, has layered meanings that are never static, but instead are constantly undergoing reassessment, reconfigurations, and redefinition. Understanding the ways that spaces are transformed, both physically and figuratively, through the embedded social meanings placed within them is key to understanding the ways that people internalized and negotiated outside influences, such as the structure of the built environment, and can provide additional illumination to the subject of identity formation. In this way, the combination of place making and place identity create a feedback loop in which people imbue space with meaning, that then affect how other people understand themselves vis-à-vis that place, which in turn is used to make new meanings for those places. Therefore, the identities of places, and the identities that they inspire within the people who reside and interact within those places, is constantly shifting and changing as place identity and place making work to redefine peoples’ physical environments. Anderson’s (1987) Vancouver Chinatown work, in

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<sup>4</sup> Note that the use of ‘place’ in ‘place making’ and ‘place identity’ is more closely aligned with De Certeau’s ‘space’ than with his use of ‘place’

which she found that a new type of ‘Chinese’ identity was created when families who had not previously identified with one another were grouped into a designated Chinatown, is an example of how ethnicities can be negotiated by outside forces as part of the place identity process.

### Chapter Organization

#### *Women’s Identity Performances*

To address the ways that women’s identities were uniquely shaped by the cultural and built environments of the anthracite region, it is important to establish the historical context of the anthracite region as well as to discuss the ways that women performed their identities. The selective purchase, use, display, and discard of material culture can be used to better understand consumers’ performances of identity, which can provide insights into the ways that individuals sought to define themselves for others. Drawing on material culture recovered during archaeological excavations, oral histories, and dominant cultural ideologies from the period, I discuss the ways that women were able to use material culture to live the material realities and identities they wanted for themselves rather than the material realities that their circumstances dictated.

Chapter 2 presents the historical context of the anthracite region including its development as an industrial powerhouse through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This section also presents the history of ethnic migration to the area during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including discussing the various forms of discrimination that migrants faced because of their identities as migrants.



Chapter 3 delves into women's performance of gender identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, including the ways that their identities as women was further impacted by their identities as migrants and as members of the economic working class. This chapter uses historical discussions on women's proper societal roles in order to provide context for the gendered tasks and responsibilities that women in company towns adopted. I argue that many of these women used material culture to establish themselves as members of the middle class, and followed social conventions specific to middle class womanhood, as a way of negotiating their identities. However, these instances of identity negotiation through consumption and behavior only affect the level of the individual; outside of the social context of Northeastern Pennsylvania coal towns, the class-crafted identities of women in company towns would have crumbled.

### *Identities in the Home*

Women's cultural responsibilities within the home also meant that women were a driving force in defining the identity of their households. Although women could express the identity of their households (in addition to their own identities) through material consumption and status signaling, women could also express status through the modification (where physically or in use) of their living spaces.

While Chapter 3 explores the ways that anthracite women crafted and negotiated their own identities, Chapter 4 addresses the ways that they shaped the identities of their entire household. I use mainstream ideologies that reference gender, class, and ethnicity status to speak to the consumption strategies that women pursued on behalf of their families within the home. By looking at household ceramic consumption patterns and

household decorations, I can discuss the ways that women's enacting of their gendered responsibilities as wives within the traditional domestic sphere also had implications for their ways of embodying their identities as migrants and as working people.

Chapter 5 continues to look at the intersections of identity formation within the confines of the household, but this time shifts to the built environment rather than the consumables of the place. I explore how the changing function of rooms as well as modifications inside and outside the house had implications for how women wanted their families to be understood within society. I suggest that these re-definitions through changes in the physical environment were more than just signals to others, but also signals to the family itself as a way to cement their chosen identities.

### *Landscapes' Impact on Identities*

While families were able to and modify aspects of the built environment, they were not able to affect other parts. The organization and arrangement of the company towns was done intentionally to shape peoples' reactions to each other and to the company.

Understanding how the built environment shaped peoples' actions and, by extension, the performances of their respective identities, a better picture of the influences of the built environment at a large scale on individuals' identities can be discussed.

Chapter 6 presents a discussion of workers' house lots, including the ways that workers organized the small parcels of land as a method of expressing their own agency and identities within the tightly controlled landscape of the company town. Although gardens, outbuildings, and utilities were common to every company house, the exact

configuration and utilization of these spaces provided a way for workers to pursue varied social goals.

Finally, Chapter 7 analyzes the company town landscape as a whole to discuss the ways that the company used town planning to shape workers' identities, and the ways that workers reacted to these methods of control. By controlling the names of places, the quality of houses, and where workers were allowed to live, the company exerted tremendous influence over the everyday lived experiences of workers. However, workers used aspects of the company town layout, such as the deep and narrow lots, or the practice of ground rent, to build ethnic solidarity. Furthermore, the shifting power relations between workers and company as the age of paternalism began to wane reveals itself in the revaluation of the company town plan.

### Conclusion

This work seeks to examine the ways that women used gendered roles and expectations to their own advantage to wield leverage in an environment that was largely built and defined by men and industry. Even within the circumscribed instance of anthracite coal company towns, women were able to use middle and upper class gendered social expectations in order to gain a measure of power and control over their lives and the lives of their families. Through the introduction of mass produced material culture, solidly working class women were able to secure their admission to the middle class by owning the items associated with the upper classes. Similarly, working class women used their house lots and rented company homes to perform proper middle class gender roles. By drawing on the intersections of their various identities, including gender, class, and ethnic

identities, women in the anthracite region were able to develop methods for successfully coping with the deprivation inherent in living in a community dependent on the goodwill of capitalist resource extraction in addition to the disadvantages associated with being women in an industrial environment.

The dissertation concludes with the presentation of two models of tiers of interaction that outline the material and ideological relationships between industrial U.S. society, coal companies, company towns, and women in anthracite households. These models draw together ideological influences, material culture influences, and influences perpetuated by the built environment to present the ways that identities as immigrants, women, and members of the working community created unique life experiences.

Ultimately, this discussion and the resulting models find that while industrial society and coal companies exerted pressure on households in multiple ways and aimed at shaping multiple forms of identity, women in these households were also able to subvert those messages into forms that suited their own aims.

## Chapter 2. Historical Background

“The coal you dig is not Slavish coal, or Polish coal, or Irish coal. It’s coal.”  
John Mitchell

“The old saying that it takes two generations to make a gentleman is being refuted every day, for Americans are remarked not only for their facility in amassing fortunes but in furnishing themselves with presentable manners on short notice.”  
Correct Social Usage 1903

### Introduction

Understanding the geographical and cultural contexts of the anthracite region is key to understanding the lives of workers in anthracite company towns. The treatment of working class immigrant families, including immigrant women, was a direct outgrowth of the social, industrial, and settlement histories of the area. Acknowledging this current version of history will provide a platform that will be expanded upon throughout this dissertation through the incorporation of other, more diverse narratives. This chapter will begin with a discussion of company towns and corporate paternalism. That will be followed by an overview of the development and growth of anthracite coal mining in the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania. This overview will then transition to a discussion of historical migration to the region during the coal mining era before covering the histories of Eckley and Pardeesville, the two towns that are the focus of this study.

### A Short History of U.S. Company Towns

Company towns are, at their heart, an economic solution to a geographical problem. At the most basic level, a company town can be defined as “any community which has been built wholly to support the operations of a single company” (Allen 1966:4). Others have

offered narrower definitions, such as Mulrooney's definition derived from company towns in the western Pennsylvania bituminous coal mining region, which is dependent on the presence of five primary characteristics: the primary employer is also the primary landowner, houses are generally two story wood-frame structures, there must be a clear hierarchy of architecture within the town separating management from labor, housing is located near the worksite, and architectural styles of work houses are observed to be extremely similar (1989:1). Late 18th and early 19th century technological limitations as well as social and economic considerations meant that the construction of a company town was often the best scenario for both employer and employee. Locating housing at work sites meant that employers did not need to figure out how to transport large numbers of workers long distances from already-established towns in order to reach as-yet undeveloped (and often rural) natural resources. In order to attract and retain workers in these towns, however, civic social considerations had to be made. Amenities found in established towns, including churches, stores, schools, and medical facilities, had to be provided in these rural communities. Finally, by owning the town itself, companies were able to plan for economic considerations, such as the possibility of needing to develop land where worker houses had been built at a future time. All of these conditions made the construction of temporary, rural, and majority (if not wholly) company-owned towns a logical solution (Allen 1966). Practitioners who designed company town landscapes before the age of the 'new' company town (the age when the design and construction of these towns became a professional endeavor that more deeply integrated the lessons of corporate benevolence and progressive reforms), constructed landscapes that were

intended to overtly exert social pressures and reinforce social structures through the built environment.<sup>5</sup>

The company town arrangement has a long history in the United States. The first company town, established in Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1645, underscored the ability of industry to promote urbanization in rural parts of the continent. The role of company towns in shaping the American labor force continued to be refined and developed as time passed. It wasn't until the introduction of Alexander Hamilton and Tench Coxe's model industrial hub of Paterson, New Jersey, that "a completely new social and physical order" within American industry was established (Crawford 1995:14; Green 2010). Company towns for industries as wide ranging as timber-cutting, mining, gun production, rope production, sawmilling, iron manufacturing, and textile milling expanded and contracted in the successive centuries. Some, though not all, of the men who founded these towns, fueled by a constant stream of migrants from Europe and enabled by loosely enforced or nonexistent labor protections, were able to, in the words of one scholar, "operate [towns] as private fiefdoms" (Wagner and Obermiller 2010:12). Soon after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the traditional company town model largely ceased to exist as this form of paternalism increasingly fell out of favor towards the end of the Progressive Era (Crawford 1995:2). Today, as de-industrialization continues to spread across the country, the need for these relics dwindles and transforms them from company towns to

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<sup>5</sup> Crawford (1995) defines the 'new' company town era as between 1913 and 1925, when "company town planning [transformed] from a vernacular building activity to a professional design task, undertaken by architects, landscape architects, and city planners" (1). Although these new versions of company towns still used social structure to instill social control over residents, these new towns were professionally done with an eye to aesthetics and green spaces that helped to hide some of its inherent coercion.

unremarkable suburban neighborhoods (Roller 2015:viii; Kendree and Shepherd Planning Consultants 1967; Vicino 2013).

Labor historians have pointed out that the structure of the company town model enabled employers to promote anti-collective-action measures within their towns (Fishback 1992; see Corbin 1981, Brandes 1976). A 1925 Coal Commission report noted several such clauses in representative coal town leases. These clauses included dramatically restrictive termination notices (averaging 5 days, where the normal lease termination standard was the length of a rental payment period), made leases contingent on employment (which legally enabled companies to evict striking workers immediately), required all tenants and visitors of tenants to be approved by the company (which prevented union organizers from meeting with workers), and included language that allowed the company to remove rent from the workers' pay, which the company could then manipulate if a disagreement arose (Fishback 1992:347-348). Controlling leases and visitors wasn't the only power companies had over their employees in the company town system. The company store was a central part of the industrial paternalist framework, as the company-controlled store could control the consumption habits of workers. Workers on strike were regularly denied credit at the company store as a way of 'starving out' the strikers. The company store was also necessary in a functional capacity as a supplier for work-related materials, including dynamite, boots, picks, and shovels, as individual workers typically did not have the ability to acquire and store materials such as dynamite and blasting caps themselves. The company was also able to extract excess profit from the store system by holding a monopoly within the town and raising prices above market



rate.<sup>6</sup> Vendors selling meat (and, by one account, beer) regularly came through town with wagons of product that they then sold directly off the wagon. Because the company owned the entirety of the town, vendors present without company permission could be arrested for trespassing and/or ejected. While the store is a common company town trope, many companies also provided additional services, such as boarding houses, a post office, a rail depot, schools, and churches (Wallace 1988:138; Roller 2015: 189).

As the primary landlord, companies had the ability to monopolize rent prices; however, an analysis of the cost of construction and average lifespan of a coal mine shows that rent was appropriate or, at times, even below the threshold a company would need to charge to recoup its losses. In this case, the company housing system was favorable for both employees and employers. Employers were granted methods of control they could use to suppress labor unrest, while workers were freed from the responsibilities of long-term loans in conjunction with uncertain employment. When the mine was finished, workers whose houses were not close to another industry or source of employment would have found their investment worthless. In fact, Fishback (1992: 355) found that when there was only one employer within commuting range, “worker demand for homeownership diminished.” Workers recognized that their mobility was an asset that could be leveraged against mistreatment or work shortages and stoppages. Additionally, because housing was owned by the company, the company could (and did) adjust rents in response to work shortages – a common problem in the coal fields during the winter months when the ability to ship coal diminished and so demand at ports dropped. In this

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<sup>6</sup> Outside vendors did sometimes operate within company towns, but only with the express permission of the company

way, company housing represented impermanence, but also freedom and choice, for workers.

Corporate profit was still the motivating factor. Fishback (1992) found that companies charged cheaper rents for their housing when compared with housing in nearby cities, but also that company houses had fewer modern conveniences, such as running water and electricity (U.S. Coal Commission 1925:1437). Other reports, too, voiced concern about the housing provided for workers under the guise of paternalism. “It is assumed that the influence of proper shelter on health is understood,” begins one company town housing report from 1914, “and that not a lack of appreciation so much as a lack of knowledge of the best remedies is responsible for many of the undesirable conditions that exist at mining towns” (White 1914:5). Company towns also fell victim to national trends in sanitation. Work by Fishback and Lauszus (1989) in bituminous towns at the turn of the century outlines how sanitation in pre-existing company towns was largely a function of the cost of installation and the price of coal. While new towns were built with sewer systems or ‘pail’ privies, 19<sup>th</sup> century towns were largely left to cope with the systems of waste disposal that were installed initially, even when data showed that worker productivity increased when sanitation was improved (1989:139-140).

### *Paternalism and Industry*

Company towns and the services they provided employees were just one form of corporate paternalism. Oftentimes, companies went beyond the outfitting of houses by instituting policies with the goal of shaping the social fabric of their workforce (often to

the company's benefit). While paternalism in theory sought to provide for workers, paternalism in practice suffered from competition with corporate profits.

Based in the notion of the social contract, paternalism is simply the remuneration of workers beyond the payment of a standard wage (Tone 1997:1). Although the term 'welfare capitalism' came to replace the increasingly maligned term 'paternalism,' the central tenants of the concept are unchanged. Today's employer-sponsored pensions, stock options, and employer-subsidized childcare and health insurance, just to name a few, are all modern forms of paternalism. Historically, paternalism in the United States is as old as industry itself. Prior to the Progressive Era, paternal corporate benevolence defined the ways that companies related to their employees. Companies made decisions about what was best for the worker – indeed, as the Latin root *pater* indicates, as a father guiding a child – and imposed those decisions upon workers. In practice this approach ranges from fairly common-place regulations such as the banning of alcohol on company property to the extreme lengths seen at Henry Ford's River Rouge automobile manufacturing complex, where employment came with a team of sociologists who could inspect workers' homes and interview families at any time in order to ensure 'morality' was being maintained within the factory's working population (Batchelor 1994). Tone observes that capitalism necessitated the development of paternalism, as paternalism was able to solve many of the problems inherent to capitalism. Paternalism could "maximize productivity, eradicate labor unrest, and curry public approval by furnishing special provisions to workers" (Tone 1997:1). Tone's idea follows Bernstein's (1960) thesis that companies adopted paternalism to prevent the establishment of unions, or to persuade workers to disband unions where one was already present. Bernstein posits that paternal

benevolence was the “padded glove over [the] iron fist,” with companies adopting policies that benefitted workers for obeying as part and parcel to policies that punished workers for not obeying. Violence-driven worker manipulation, then, is fundamentally the same as reward-driven work manipulation: both ultimately rely on coercion. Paternalism relies on “employee deference, guided by familial metaphor accentuating reciprocity, mutuality, and obligation,” in order to ensure a labor force that acts in the interest of the company (Tone 1997:1).

Paternalism as it had been defined during the 19th century fundamentally changed with the Pullman Strike in 1894 and the subsequent rise in workers unionization, strikes, and walk-outs in the years that followed. At Pullman, a company town located outside Chicago built for the factory workers that built Pullman train cars, workers called for a strike to protest high rents and decreasing wages. Pullman itself, however, had long been admired as a ‘model’ company town: George Pullman had built the town with a vision for a clean, orderly, and moral city away from the ills of Chicago. Pullman featured markets, public parks, libraries, schools, churches, and over 1,000 homes that featured luxuries such as indoor plumbing, gas, and trash removal. Pullman was based on the logic that if a company town provided all the necessities that workers required, labor strife could be avoided entirely (Crawford 1995). Once the 1894 strike demonstrated that Pullman’s logic was flawed, industrialists took note and shifted tactics by adopting a democratic paternalist structure or divesting the company from the paternalist approach altogether. At Pullman, the company was ordered by the Illinois state Supreme Court to divest the town in 1898 because the company’s incorporation charter did not include provisions for the town’s operation (Crawford 1995:43).

While the Pullman Strike was an important turning point, scholars have additionally identified the shifting national conversation in the first decades of the 20th century as accelerating the end of the 19th century form of paternalism. Union membership exploded during this time, and by the end of World War I, the impact was too great to ignore. Companies fought strikes and unionization by threatening reprisal against workers, including instituting industry-wide blacklisting for those that organized. Recognizing that the old form of paternalism was insufficient under these new conditions, companies began offering the types of compromises that more closely mirror our current forms of welfare capitalism. Incentives such as job ladders, wage incentives, and corporate dispute boards sought to replace the primary functions of the union. These types of self-concessions were popular during the 1920s, but were essentially abandoned by the 1930s. Scholars such as Cohen (1990) and Halpern (1992) identify the Great Depression as the root of these changes. Cohen observes that workers had long survived labor abuses by self-segregating into racial or ethnic-based groups. Companies took advantage of the divisions between these groups by stoking racial and ethnic strife when possible, such as through the hiring of certain groups during strikes. With the economic devastation of the Great Depression, though, many of these organizations found themselves unable to assist. It was this break down of ethnic divisions that finally spurred workers to begin working together to address their labor abuses. Their primary method of addressing these issues, re-joining and strengthening their workplace unions, was accomplished with the help of an unusual ally: national politics.

The protections for workers introduced by the Roosevelt administration in the aftermath of the Depression built a sense of personal relationship between workers and their nationally elected leaders. The New Deal's protections for workers lead to a belief that the government was invested in supporting workers against management. Although Cohen cites these 1930s federal labor laws as the drivers, individual states had been aiming to curb corporate control over workers for decades. Massachusetts had established a state-level labor bureau in 1869, and by 1903, 34 other states had done the same (Tone 1997: 25). Northern states enacted sanitation and safety regulations for factories during the final quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1904, the number of hours a child could work was limited in 29 states while laws in 19 states limited the number of hours women could work as a means of minimizing "what lawmakers believed to be the adverse consequences of industrial wage labor on women's health and morals" (Tone 1997: 25-26).<sup>7</sup> Changes were also already in motion at the federal level. In 1884, the Bureau of Labor and the position of commissioner of labor were established by an Act of Congress (Tone 1997: 27). However, the agency was largely tasked with compiling information and writing reports on problems related to labor and industry rather than with finding policy solutions to these problems (Monthly Labor Review 1955:4). With increasing federal attention to the plight of workers in the 1930s, workers and companies alike found themselves in a new labor paradigm. The efforts of Progressive activists to bring attention to the treatment of workers at the federal level was ultimately rewarded, although a hybrid of legislative protections and voluntary corporate welfare programs took root. Perks ranging from free lunches, corporate sports teams, and mandatory breaks

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<sup>7</sup> Pennsylvania had passed laws limiting both by 1904.

to life insurance, sick days, and pensions were increasingly introduced alongside federal protections for union members, workman's compensation for accidents on the job, and social security and unemployment insurance. While companies increasingly abandoned the old methods of worker control (owning houses, providing schools, and churches) in favor of these new methods of worker amelioration, the old company towns of the by-gone era were increasingly outmoded. The fact that company towns ever existed (and increasingly are ceasing to exist) is a testament to what Allen calls "the dramatic economic evolution of the nation" (1966: 8): the young nation's insatiable desire for the raw materials of industrialization required industrialists to develop creative solutions to infrastructural and population challenges.

Now that the origins and benefits of paternalism and its transformation in the US context through the 19th and early 20th centuries has been outlined, I will delve deeper into the anthracite example of corporate paternalism, including the ways that it also changed according to pressures from society writ large.

### *Coal Mining and Corporate Paternalism*

In many ways, the development of company towns in the anthracite region followed the development of company towns in other mining regions across the country during the early 1800s: through convenience rather than planned malevolence. Kim Hoagland observes that "total control of the landscape was never possible for the mining companies. It is this lack of complete dominion that is so intriguing" (2010:xvi). The development of anthracite company towns followed the basic pattern of company town construction. Rather than wait for individuals to purchase land, construct houses, and

develop a community that could support the number of workers necessary for a mining operation, companies expedited this process by building their own housing as well as providing the necessary social and civil infrastructures. Locating housing at the mine itself negated at least one practical obstacle by guaranteeing that the company would have a workforce literally on hand at all times. Companies did not necessarily “strategize an autocratic, paternalistic environment,” but rather found that housing attracted workers, and that, along with civic buildings such as churches, schools, stores, and doctor’s offices, helped to retain workers at the company (2010:xvi).

Although the initial adoption of a paternalistic business model might have been adopted in Northeastern Pennsylvania anthracite region for convenience rather than control, the inherent inequality of the system made it attractive. Coal companies were able to use tenets of paternalism for their benefit, both through controlling workers with the constant threat of eviction as well as a tool for propaganda for outsiders concerned about the treatment of workers in these controlled environments. Paternalism’s benevolence was not universal and company managers’ ability to control workers’ access to perks such as nicer housing with more amenities, selectively enforce rules, and enforce racial and ethnic segregation within the towns through manipulating housing policy are just a handful of examples of the ways that companies could abuse their authority. The layout of the company town was important for transferring social cues from employers to employees. This relationship shaped every aspect of corporate-worker interaction, including within the built environment. The social hierarchy was reified in the company town landscape through building quality, location, and size. Although Alison Hoagland states that the social contract between workers and management inherent in company



towns provided workers with a degree of agency, I argue that the corporate practice of blacklisting coupled with the remoteness of the anthracite region (and therefore limited employment opportunities), as well as the industry practice of maintaining a high level of unemployment in order to increase competition for jobs, severely circumscribed workers' ability to 'renegotiate' their side of the paternalism contract in the anthracite fields (Hoagland 2010).<sup>8</sup> Instead, workers in the anthracite region were presented with a different form of agency. Instead of being able to negotiate with the company, workers were able to literally move to other mining company towns elsewhere in the anthracite region.

### *Historical Background of Coal Mining in the Wyoming Valley*

The historical context of anthracite's discovery and the geographical context of the region meant that company towns became common features through the anthracite region of the Wyoming Valley. Europeans first discovered coal on the banks of the Susquehanna River in 1762 when Connecticut settlers brought to the Wyoming Valley by the Pennimite-Connecticut Wars documented their coal vein finds at what would become Wilkes-Barre (Matkowsky and Curra 2002; Edmunds 2002:2; Christian 1978:12). By 1769, anthracite from the deposit was being used by blacksmiths in Wilkes-Barre (Latzko 2011;

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<sup>8</sup> Hoagland qualifies her statement by saying, "as top-down and autocratic as this paternalism was, no control was absolute. Workers were participants in this system – perhaps not entirely willingly, constrained by opportunity as they were" but then goes on to state that, "management could build houses that workers refused to inhabit. Tenants could demand central heating and get it. Management could raise rents on company houses, and workers could threaten to strike until management backed down. Each of these three situations occurred in Copper Country [of Michigan]" (2010: xxi). No record of similar negotiations by workers have been found in the cases of Eckley or Pardeesville; additionally, the Northeastern Pennsylvania company town example appears to be a more rigid form of paternalism than Hoagland experienced in Michigan, further raising the possibility that coal mine workers in the anthracite region were more limited in their options for achieving equality than their northern counterparts were.

Matkowsky and Curra 2002). The discovery of coal began a domino effect, with additional coal seams being identified near modern-day Beaver Meadows in 1790, at Carbondale in 1804, and in the areas surrounding Hazleton in 1826 (Genovese 2003; Wesolowsky 1996; Matkowsky and Curra 2002). However, aside from local use, including the first documented metallurgical use of anthracite to make nails in Wilkes-Barre in 1778, anthracite coal had no real impact on the industrial economy due to the lack of transportation infrastructure necessary to bring the coal to East Coast markets. Abijah and John Smith were the first to successfully transport anthracite coal via the Susquehanna River in 1807 (Latzko 2011). It was only with the start of the War of 1812 that anthracite production finally reached industrial levels in Northeastern Pennsylvania. As the Northeast was cut off from English and Virginian coal supplies and the price of firewood rose, industrialists and citizens alike were forced to adopt anthracite coal for cooking, heating, and manufacturing needs (Dublin and Licht 2005; Matkowsky and Curra 2002).

However, despite the introduction of river and canal navigation and gravity-powered railroads, the trip from Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, to New York City still took seven days. By 1846, 643 miles of canals had been constructed in Eastern Pennsylvania, further reducing cost and time to market; these advances would be short lived, however, as the introduction and spread of railroads in the 1840s rendered the canals obsolete (Matkowsky and Curra 2002:13). The introduction of railroads to the area not only decreased cost and increased export of coal and iron to major East Coast cities, but it also ended Northeastern Pennsylvania's cultural and technological isolation (Stepenoff 1999:23). While men such as Tench Coxe, Asa Packer, and Ario Pardee

immediately bought large swaths of land and began using capital to build the infrastructure necessary to move the coal to market, small business partnerships appeared overnight seeking leases of promising land. In 1854, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed legislation allowing companies to “build and operate entire towns without the influence of outside jurisdiction ... Thus, the lifestyle of the miners and their families residing in these communities revolved almost entirely around the enterprise of coal mining” (Bennett 1990:19-20). By controlling the land around the mine and the buildings that housed workers, mine owners were able to become both the primary employer and the sole landlord on vast tracts of private land (Christian 1987; United States Congress 1889; Mulrooney 1989:1). Designing and building the towns themselves allowed coal mine owners to dictate everything from the layout of the town to the floor plans of the houses, and owners seized this opportunity to inscribe the social hierarchies of management, labor, and the means of production on to the physical space of the company town (Mulrooney 1989:1; Methenny 2007). Additionally, companies were also able to wield power over workers when unrest arose by being legally able to evict strikers and their families from the company-owned properties (Mulrooney 1989:109; United States Congress 1889).

During the course of the 19th century, the coal industry increasingly faced internal issues. Increased transportation meant increased supply, which, when combined with the only seasonal need for heating coal, drove down prices (Dublin and Licht 2005). In 1830, anthracite was selling for \$7.25 per ton. By 1840, it had declined to \$4.91 per ton, followed in 1850 by \$3.64 per ton, and, by 1860, had dropped even further to \$3.40 per ton at docks in Philadelphia (Miners’ Journal 1867: 34). Yet even as prices dropped,

production skyrocketed: a total of 365 tons of coal had been mined by 1820, which jumped to a total of three million tons mined by 1850 (Powell 1980: 12). As coal mine owners and railroad owners battled for control of the market, overproduction and overinvestment created dramatic financial instability, which fueled class conflict as coal miners' wages continued to drop precipitously.

Life was difficult, tumultuous, dirty, and short for industrial workers. Recently arrived immigrant men typically began work as laborers and, after learning English and taking an exam, could become miners; however, very few immigrants had the money or time to pursue this route. This was an intentional form of structural inequality that created feedback loops of poverty within the ranks of immigrants and facilitated social discrimination of different ethnicities (Shackel and Roller 2012). Mulrooney's (1989) work in coal company towns in Western Pennsylvania has detailed how workers were segregated into specific types of housing and were prevented from escaping. Her study found that a worker's ethnic group affiliation would signify what occupations they could hold within the company, which in turn dictated how much the worker could earn; earnings were a major factor in determining what type of house the company would rent to a worker, with the poorest paid workers receiving the cheapest housing. Because the rent for these houses was cheap, the structures were poorly made compared to those supplied to miners and middle management and amenities provided for higher earning families were not supplied. In this way, ethnicity indirectly determined everything from which neighborhood people could live in to whether a family would have indoor plumbing (see Bennett 1990). Men working inside the coal mine, including mine laborers and miners, operated in damp, dark, musty conditions using only hand tools such as

shovels, picks, and hand drills. Every day they faced imminent threats from cave-ins, floods, and explosions, but also silent, insidious threats such as Black Lung Disease and poisonous, odorless gases (Wesolowsky 1996; Matkowsky and Curra 2002). Male children who reached the age of eight or nine years old began as breaker boys – extremely dangerous work that routinely killed and maimed. Around the age of 12, boys could begin working inside the mines opening the large air-flow doors for passing coal carts. At 14, they could begin serving as laborers. Similarly, working class female children as young as five could be sent to textile mills where their small hands and fingers were needed to reach into the spinning, looming, and other machines. Because wage work was believed to be morally degrading for women, families usually only sent girls into the mills if it was an absolute financial necessity (Sterba 1996). Working around fast moving machines could and did result in permanent maiming that would impact the girl for the rest of her life (Figure 7). However, because of even more severe wage-gender gaps, the small income the girls earned often failed to move these families out of poverty and, ironically, served to deepen the cycle of poverty and lack of education (Greenwald 1996). Between 1880 and 1920, the majority of women working in the mills were under the age of 20 (Sterba 1996). Young women generally left the textile mills when they married or when their economic situation improved enough to make the additional income unnecessary (Stepenoff 1999; Kessler-Harris 1982). Leaving the mill, however, did not mean the end of women's work. These additional responsibilities will be explored in more depth in Chapter 3.

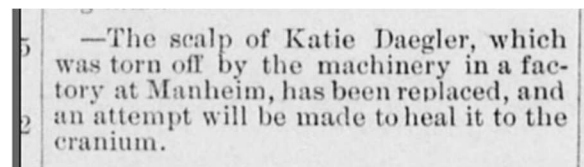


Figure 7. Newspaper report on girl scalped by machine. From Freeland Tribune, 20 February 1890.

The Pennsylvania anthracite region would never again be as economically successful as it was during the Gilded and Progressive Eras. As anthracite coal veins became depleted and those that remained became more difficult to access, mechanical scraping, also known as strip mining, rose to prominence as a preferred method of mineral extraction (Dublin and Licht 2005). Additionally, the inability to use coal cutting machines to mine anthracite, where variable seam thickness and hardness made the use of such machines impractical, further impeded the ability of the industry to keep up with bituminous mining's mechanization (Matkowsky and Curra 2002:29). The death rattle of the anthracite industry, however, is largely identified as the Knox Mine Disaster, which occurred on January 22, 1959. Twelve miners drowned when the Susquehanna River broke through the roof of the River Slope Mine and flooded the workings. Subsequent investigations discovered that the roof of the mine was only 6 ft thick (despite federal mandates requiring a 35 ft roof), that the company was owned in part by organized crime, and that the UMWA District 1 President also held a financial stake in the mine – a serious conflict of interest (Dublin and Licht 2005). Even before the Knox Mine Disaster, though, the anthracite industry was on the decline. World War II had provided a much-needed second wind for the industry as anthracite was purchased for steel production and other industrial applications, but, once the war ended, the region became mired in cycles of unemployment and underemployment which caused many to leave for more promising economic opportunities in New Jersey and New York. The textile industry, another economic staple for the region, is also believed to have peaked around 1910, after which competition from Southern states finally stripped Pennsylvania of the production monopoly it had briefly established in the 1880s (Stepenoff 1999). The textile industry

would begin a slow decline that wouldn't officially be over until neoliberal policies implemented in the 1980s finally closed the last garment factories in Northeastern Pennsylvania (Wolensky et al. 2002). In just under two centuries, Northeastern Pennsylvania experienced the entire cycle of industrialism and is today considered part of the American 'Rust Belt' (Dublin and Licht 2005).

Throughout those two centuries of industrial rise and fall, push and pull factors brought hundreds of thousands of immigrants from across Europe to Northeastern Pennsylvania. Seeking a better life, more opportunities, or just looking to escape desperate circumstances back home, migrants came to work in Northeastern Pennsylvania's coal mines. Some raised families and spent the rest of their lives in America, while others earned enough to pursue plans back in Europe. The next section addresses where these migrants came from, as well as the social circumstances they encountered when they arrived in the United States.

*Strangers in a Strange Land: The Legal and Social Landscapes of Historical Migration to the Anthracite Region*

America's origin story leans heavily on a narrative of immigrants escaping Europe in search of a new home characterized by dignity and freedom from persecutions; however, as the lived reality of workers in the anthracite fields will show, the migration process in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was defined precisely by its lack of dignity, mistreatment, and near-constant attempts to control or manipulate migrants. This section explores how the majority of migrants, once arrived in Pennsylvania, were established as an 'other' through the processes of settlement and integration in coal company towns. This section

will begin with a discussion of the legal and social landscapes that migrants found themselves in when they arrived in Northeastern Pennsylvania, followed by a characterization of the integration and settlement processes for four ethnic groups.

### *Legal Landscapes*

The United States has had a long and complicated history with migration. From the earliest days of the country's founding, migration has been a hallmark of legislative exclusivity and has knowingly promoted racist, sexist, and religious persecution under the guise of 'protecting' the country and its future. Understanding the ways that migrants experienced, responded, and adapted to their interactions with the forces of US immigration and settlement can provide a window into the ways in which other intersections of identity, especially gender, can shape the outcomes for individual migrants and their households (Abrego 2014).

The very first federal law passed in the United States with the intention of controlling immigration dates to 1790. While the law itself is now little more than a footnote in US immigration history, it does provide an indication of the depth of the country's obsession with who should be considered a citizen and its interest in regulating the ethnic fabric of its population. From this very first law, the ability to naturalize and become a citizen was restricted to white individuals; it would take eighty years for this racial exclusion clause to be amended to include people of African descent (LeMay and Barkan 1999). Many subsequent immigration laws would be passed, including several that amended the 1790 law, but a cultural undertone that began with this 1790 law would continue to pervade immigration legislation for the next century and a half: an emphasis



on Nordic and Anglo-Saxon racial superiority and the need to protect that supremacy at all costs (Feagin 1997; Jacobson 1998). Within thirty years of the United States' founding, "the 'white race' [had] emerged as a constructed social group for the first time in history ... [and] the dominant economic and political elites, still entirely north European in ancestry, became bastions of a racialized nativism after the Civil War" (Feagin 1997:19-20). It was during the latter half of the 19th century that legislation targeting specific ethnic, political, and corporeal groups for exclusion became the primary method of regulating immigration to the US. Laws aimed at shaping who would be permitted entry to the US and, therefore, who could eventually gain citizenship exploded during the time period and continued unabated until the 1920s (Table 1).

Table 1. Select historic US immigration laws and the resulting population restrictions, 1880-1930. From LeMay and Barkan 1999.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Law</b>	<b>Result</b>
1882	Chinese Exclusion Act	Bans skilled and unskilled Chinese from entering and prohibits any Chinese from applying for citizenship
1882	Immigration Act of 1882	Bans convicts, lunatics, idiots, and those believed to eventually end up on public assistance from entering
1888	The Scott Act	Bans Chinese workers from returning to US if they leave
1891	Immigration Act of 1891	Bans those in polygamous marriages, the mentally ill, and people with diseases; allows government to deport people who enter illegally
1892	The Geary Act	Requires all Chinese in the US to carry resident permit at all times
1903	Anarchist Exclusion Act	Can deny beggars, epileptics, and those with radical political views from entering the country
1906	Naturalization Act of 1906	Bans people who cannot speak English from citizenship
1907	Immigration Act of 1907	Bans imbeciles, feeble-minded, those with disabilities, tuberculosis patients, children without parents, and people of questionable morals from entering
1917	Immigration Act of 1917	Bans people from 'Asiatic Barred Zone' (section of Asia and Pacific Islands), homosexuals, alcoholics, the insane, and criminals from entering
1921	Emergency Quota Law	Limits immigration to 350,000 persons annually based on nationality quotas set by nationality of people in US during 1910 census
1924	National Origins Act	Limits immigration to 165,000 persons annually based on nationality quotas set by nationality of people in US during 1890 census

1929	National Origins Act	Limits immigration to 150,000 persons annually based on nationality quotas set by nationality of people in US during 1920 census
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This abundance of laws reveals the ways that politicians sought to create their ‘ideal’ society: the eradication of the sick, the poor, Asians, and Eastern and Southern Europeans (the primary targets of the 1921, 1924, and 1929 acts) through the creation of a mechanism with which the government could legally eject these demographics from the populous (LeMay and Barkan 1999). Alongside the passage of these laws, a subtle shift was taking place in country’s ethnic makeup: between 1880 and 1924, more than 25 million immigrants arrived in the United States. As the majority of these migrants were low or unskilled workers that entered America’s working classes, they effectively “transformed the face of America’s laboring population” and created ethnic legacies that would characterize America for generations to come (Barrett 1992).

It was during this period of xenophobia-rooted anxiety that the majority of migrant workers came to the anthracite coal region. With each new group that arrived, fears were stoked and re-stoked over concerns such as disease, job loss, and unknown but implied danger. Beneath these societal trepidations was a reality that few cared to acknowledge: the company town system never would have functioned without immigrant labor. Prior to the introduction of coal mining, the region was only sparsely populated as the area’s thin soils made it ill-suited for farming. Once coal mining gained prominence, the low wages, remote towns, and dangerous and tedious work provided little reason for native-born Americans to leave their established farms in areas outside the mountains (Marsh 1987:341). Indeed, the need for on-site labor became so acute that many mining companies went as far as to transmit advertisements and send recruiters to certain areas within Europe in order to guarantee new waves of workers continued to arrive (Zehl

1997). While employers dispatched plenty of incentives to migrants to pull them to the anthracite region, migrants had their circumstances that pushed them to go. While migrants came for many reasons, most hoped that the move would improve their standard of living (Lewis 2011).

### *The Legal Landscape in Pennsylvania Anthracite*

In addition to seeking out migrant labor, industrialists also sought to control that labor. Industrialists were able to characterize “certain behaviors and types of people as threats to civility” as a means of garnering public support for the legislative oppression of workers’ rights. This argument is not limited to coal, and is based on the logic that any regulation of a laborer’s hours, wages, or working conditions by the federal or state governments impeded the very foundations of democracy; when this argument is coupled with the increasing fear and resentment surrounding migrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries, industrialists were able to garner a level of “ideological sympathy” from the other factions of society – successfully turning public sentiment in favor of increasingly strict institutional controls on migration populations (Roller 2015:179; Dubofsky 1996:59).

The migration process was not unified for each of the different ethnic groups that arrived, however, due to the constantly shifting societal views of migration and different migrant groups. The next section will explore how the different groups to arrive in the anthracite region during the mining period experienced the migration and integration process and how their unique social situations drastically affected their lived experiences.

### *Social Landscapes*

The physical landscape of the anthracite region forged mobile and transient populations with little connection to the land and even less connection to each other. The nature of coal mining meant employment was uncertain at best and fleeting at worst, as towns regularly boomed and busted in a matter of years as factors such as mine profitability, fires, and even corporate bankruptcy could render towns obsolete in a matter of weeks (Bertoff 1965:263). The landscape itself, with its narrow valleys and sheer ridges, mostly precluded larger, more stable settlements that would have fostered a more permanent and, therefore more substantial, social landscape. While anthracite communities became known for their durability and resourcefulness, those qualities also prevented many of their inhabitants from benefiting from the advantages of social growth and physical embeddedness that migrants' counterparts experienced in other parts of the nation. In effect, industrialists were able to take ready advantage of these poorly organized and weak communities (Bertoff 1965:263). The fact that these assorted, isolated towns were only brought together under the heavy hand of railroad barons reveals the deep and inextricable ties industry has to the very nature of life in the anthracite region (Bertoff 1965). Within these stories of migration, settlement, and integration, the effects of the physical place on the lives of people cannot be discounted.

While immigrants from around the world arrived in the anthracite region looking for work during the 19th century, the majority of immigrants are identified as having originated in one of four key geographic locations: Wales, Ireland, Eastern Europe, and Southern Europe. Although migrants arrived from all of these countries throughout the 19th century, each group had a specific period in which their arrival characterized the

majority of migrants arriving in the region. While there are similarities between the ways that each group experienced the migration process, there are also important differences that impacted the lives of all migrants. Historian Rowland Bertoff observes that:

[The] things that were *not* present in the society of the anthracite region appear no less significant than things that were. Instead of a simple melodrama of ruthless bosses and embattled workingmen, the story is one of groups, classes, institutions, and individuals so equivocally related as to be mutually unintelligible and quite heedless of each other. The region had plenty of groups, classes, institutions, and notable personages, to be sure, but it is hard to find among them any functional design of reciprocal rights and duties, the nuts and bolts which pin together a stable social order (1965:261-262, emphasis in original).

Bertoff's recognition of a lack of solidarity between immigrant groups despite their similarities demonstrates the complexity of migration and integration in the anthracite region, where ethnic identity politics were frequently used as a means of dividing workers. Here I will explore the reasons behind why some groups were more able to integrate and advance socially in their new environments, while others remained the topic of ridicule as well as social and institutional violence for decades. Beginning with the disparate cases of the Welsh and the Irish, I will then discuss the ways that Eastern Europeans and Southern Europeans faced challenges and obstacles to integration that neither of their predecessors had endured.

### *The Welsh and the Irish: A Tale of Two Ethnic Groups*

Although the largest groups of Welsh and Irish both emigrated to the anthracite fields during roughly the same period – the Welsh between the 1830s and the 1850s, the Irish between the 1840s and 1860s, both during America's second wave of immigration – records show that the Welsh were profoundly more successful at gaining higher level

employment and better paying jobs than their Irish counterparts (Lewis 2011; McCook 2004). This is largely due to unequal circumstances that these two demographics came from: while the Irish and Scottish largely emigrated to find work, the Welsh came specifically to ply trades they had learned in Britain (McCook 2004). This was a particular advantage in the anthracite region, where Welsh coal miners brought vital knowledge and skills with them from experience working in Wales' anthracite mines. With this labor advantage, Welsh migrants were able to move "from field to field, coal town to coal town, and mine to mine, making decision about when and where to go based on knowledge passed along through the network of personal and professional relationships" (Lewis 2011:33). While Welsh migrants' skilled work experiences in the Old World enabled them a degree of freedom, the lack of experience for Irish migrants inversely predetermined their lack of freedom (2011:44). With no such cultural background and no industrial experience, Irish immigrants found themselves being overseen by and working under the direction of their Welsh counterparts. This discrepancy enabled Welsh migrants to ascend the social hierarchy with comparative ease.

Welsh migrants also had more social capital when compared to their Irish counterparts. British emigrants were treated as "cousins," rather than as foreigners by those English, who had arrived in the United States in the previous decades (McCook 2004:33).<sup>9</sup> Others suggest that the Welsh had the added benefit of a religious

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<sup>9</sup> Land in the anthracite region prior to the discovery of coal and the establishment of the mining industry was largely owned by wealthy English who had obtained land warrants and patents shortly after the Revolution. Some of these patent holders, such as Tench Coxe, retained their land holdings into the 20th century, while others, such as Robert Latimore, had their warrants bought out by others ("A Connected Warantee Township Map," William Livengood Jr. 1949). Because English migrants already held enormous cultural influence over the region, being able to claim cultural solidarity with the English landowners would have immensely benefited Welsh migrants.

synchronism with the English land owners and English mine engineers (Lewis 2011; Jones 1952). Although the majority of congregations in Wales had already rejected tenants of the Church of England and were largely nonconformist by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were still Protestants like the English. The Irish, on the other hand, were largely Catholic. The majority of migrants to the Hazleton area came from County Donegal, which was predominantly Catholic in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kenny 1998). The tensions between Irish and English dated back centuries, and the indignities suffered under Oliver Cromwell in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as well as the failed Irish Rebellion at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century still fostered hate and resentment between the two peoples. The fact that one of the primary causes of Irish outmigration, the potato blight and subsequent famine, were exacerbated by British Corn Laws and patterns of British absentee landownership only deepened the social divide between the two groups (Cronin and O’Callaghan 2014). These historical resentments were preserved and transformed in the new context of the Pennsylvania anthracite region in deadly and dangerous ways that will be discussed in depth later.

While the Irish continued to struggle with deprivations caused by poor pay and dangerous work in the anthracite mines, the Welsh found themselves in a unique position. Criticized by their neighbors as being “clannish” for preferring to inter-marry within the Welsh community, the Welsh were able to simultaneously seamlessly integrate into the Euro-American community while preserving their unique cultural traditions (McCook 2004:43-44). Welsh transitions were made easier by the fact that Welsh had regularly been immigrating to the US since the seventeenth century, making their foreign culture more familiar to the local community and providing migrants with well-established

contacts already in the state.<sup>10</sup> Institutions to ease the stress of transition, including ethnic clubs and fraternities, newspapers, and churches, had the dual function of providing new migrants with stability as well as preserving, transmitting, and promoting a continued longevity and pride in Welsh identity (Lewis 2011:33). A note in the Freeland Tribute from August 13, 1891, reports that a “Cambro-American eisteddfod” was planned for the following spring in Wilkes-Barre (Figure 8).<sup>11</sup> By the 1890s, the majority of Welsh migration had been over for at least one generation, indicating that Welsh migrants were imparting their cultural values on to their

American-born children. The reference to a Cambro-American festival, in particular,

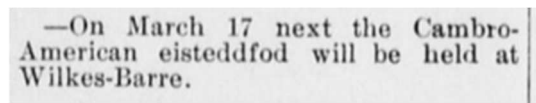


Figure 8. Newspaper reference to Cambro-American eisteddfod. From Freeland Tribune, 13 August 1891.

further solidifies this particular tradition as a blending of Old and New World cultures.

These ethnic social networks also provided a circuit of communication that enabled migrants to keep in contact with kin in the Old Country and provided invaluable contacts for new emigres looking for work in America. This combination of local familiarity and ethnic cultural preservation allowed the Welsh to enjoy the best of both worlds: although second generation Welsh migrants in America “quickly, and without much thought became Americans,” America, in turn, accepted the Welsh and aspects of their culture into mainstream American identity (Lewis 2011:43). Interestingly, as the children of Welsh migrants continued to ascend America’s social ladders, they became increasingly less involved in the coal industry. Their heightened social class (and its

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<sup>10</sup> Welsh Quakers’ negotiations with William Penn in the 1680s had resulted in the creation of the ‘Welsh Tract’: a parcel of 40,000 acres located west of Philadelphia where Welsh migrants sought to establish a self-governed Welsh settlement in which affairs would be conducted in Welsh. Although the Welsh Tract never ended up being self-governing, the potential for the creation of such a community was a huge draw for the area, and fully 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the Pennsylvania colony’s population in 1700 was Welsh.

<sup>11</sup> An eisteddfod is a type of competitive Welsh arts festival



corresponding access to better educational opportunities) and identities as ‘Americans’ opened new prospects to second and third generation, while the increasing mechanization of the industry enabled mine owners to cut costs by relying less on skilled miners from Britain and more on unskilled labor from elsewhere in Europe.

In some ways, the success of the Welsh in integrating into American society was predicated on the struggles to integrate experienced by other migrant groups. Although the Welsh migrants who arrived in the first half of the 19th century generally lacked the educational background to allow them to easily transition out of the unskilled working class population, as their wave of migration continued, more and better educated Welsh found the transition to American middle class life to be more accessible and readily attainable (Lewis 2011). Additionally, the Welsh benefited from their association with Britons during the period of “overt racism and exaggerated ethnocentrism” that came to define immigration in the latter half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Their social status, occupations, and standards of living by the time of the arrival of Eastern and Southern European migrants granted Welsh migrants the status of being part of the “‘established’ native population” (2011:43-44). Additionally, the Welsh helped solidify the divide between themselves and later migrant groups (including the contemporaneous Irish immigrants) through exacerbating the identity politics of the Protestant/Catholic divide (Jones 1952).

While the Welsh celebrated their cultural heritage, the Irish suffered for their ethnic traditions and their religious convictions. Between 1820 and 1860, approximately one in every three immigrants that arrived in the United States was Irish; of those, over 44,000 Irish-born migrants had made their way to the anthracite region by 1870 (Library

of Congress 2006a; Rodechko 1973). The majority of those who arrived before the famine were young men looking for work and opportunity, while those who emigrated during the famine were primarily families escaping starvation. The number of coal miners in Northeastern Pennsylvania doubled between 1860 and 1870, with the majority of new miners being of Irish descent (Stepenoff 1999:23). Interestingly, those who arrived after the famine were primarily young women who were looking for work or marriage opportunities, similarly to the Irish who arrived before the famine (Diner 1983; Rodechko 1973).

While the Welsh were bolstered in their migration to the anthracite region by earlier groups of Welsh migrants as well as by their cultural similarities to and associations with the English, the Irish who arrived in the anthracite region during the second wave of migration proved to have a nearly opposite experience. Although the Irish who arrived in the mid-19th century were not the poorest members of Irish society (the financial ability to emigrate required at least a slight degree of financial solvency), they were, by American standards, destitute (Library of Congress 2006a; Diner 1983). This lack of resources was compounded by the fact that the majority of Irish arrived from rural areas that had no modern industry – further disadvantaging them when compared with the skilled Welsh. Also absent in Pennsylvania (although present in the larger cities where the Irish population was more concentrated) were many of the institutional and informal support networks that had successfully organized the Welsh population. Without effective ethnic leadership, the Irish community suffered social setback after social setback. The lack of efficacy of ethnic support networks was caused in part by their inability to organize the Irish community and further exacerbated by the lack of effective

leadership available to complete such a task. Although the largest Irish fraternal organization in the US, the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), was founded by Irish in the anthracite region in 1836 in response to anti-Catholic and anti-Irish events. However, the organization itself was unable to promote the social profile of the Irish. The Molly Maguires and their connections to the AOH led the coal region branches of the AOH to be completely restructured, but distrust and suspicion continued to plague the organization anyway (Stevens 1899:213; McCormack 2018). The anthracite Irish subsequently found themselves trapped at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder with no real means for advancement (Rodechko 1973:20). The Irish's economic realities only reinforced their social isolation: their living conditions were abysmal because they were willing to accept lower wages than other, more established immigrant groups, and therefore they became the target of anger and ridicule. Anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic campaigns promoted by the 'Know Nothing' political party targeted Irish immigrants throughout the 1840s and 1850s (Library of Congress 2006a). During this period, anti-Irish sentiments were so pervasive that, in addition to preferentially hiring Welsh, English, and native-born American workers over Irish applicants, Irish were also fired in order to make jobs for those ethnicities deemed to be more desirable (Rodechko 1973). While the Irish feared their employers and the Welsh, English, and German groups that held court over the region's social scene – a fear brought about by society's open hostility and indifference towards the Irish as well as mine boss' reliance on biased public and private police forces, such as the Coal and Iron Police and the Pinkerton Detective Agency – these groups also feared the Irish.<sup>12</sup> Native-born Americans and mine owners

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<sup>12</sup> Coal operators relied on private police forces because they believed them to be more reliable than the official jurisdictions' forces. However, the local police forces were also discriminatory towards the Irish

feared that if the Irish population in the anthracite region achieved a density comparable to that in New York City, the Irish could replicate the dominance of local politics that they had succeeded in securing in New York (Rodechko 1973). With mutual distrust and a legacy of ethnic hatred, it was only a matter of time until tensions boiled over.

That tension would culminate with the Molly Maguire scandal. Gang violence, which was further exacerbated by the legal re-enforcement of ethnic strife, was propagated by both Welsh and Irish throughout the mid-19th century.<sup>13</sup> The Modocs, a Welsh gang, regularly battled with both the Sheet Iron Boys, an Irish Protestant gang, and the Molly Maguires, an Irish Catholic gang (Kenny 1998:164). The Molly Maguires would later become famous for the involvement of the Pinkerton Detective Agency and the hanging of 20 suspected members of the gang thought to be involved with a rash of violence perpetrated between 1862 and 1875. More recent evaluations of the crimes attributed to the Molly Maguires have highlighted the ethnic undertones of the violence. The first reference to the existence of an Irish secret society was in a 1857 edition of the *Miners' Journal*, which was published by a second-generation Welsh anti-Irish Catholic editor named Benjamin Bannan. Bannan would go on to blame the violence and property damage that occurred during the Long Strike of 1875 on this group. However, this

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and relied on traditional stereotypes of Irish as drunks and criminals to justify their crack-downs on Irish communities (which served to reify their initial assumptions). Rodechko cites an article from the Wilkes-Barre *Records of the Times* in which the author, while describing a disturbance that occurred during Saint Patrick's Day, states that the "police had a very persuasive way of taking prisoners to lock up, which was irresistible" (Rodechko 1973:21).

<sup>13</sup> The legal re-enforcement of this strife is seen in the example of the murder of George Major. Major was a Welshman who was shot during a Welsh-Irish volunteer fire company brawl on the night of October 30, 1874 in Mahanoy City. Major was a city burgess and a popular figure in the town. An Irishman named Daniel Dougherty, who had himself been shot during the brawl, was determined to be the murderer on the logic that Major could have returned fire on his shooter. Dougherty was thought to be a member of the Molly Maguires. The trial and the ethnic tensions set off the cultural obsession with the group and a subsequent anti-Irish movement. Dougherty was eventually acquitted when the bullet was removed from his head and found to not match the kind of gun that Major had with him that night (Lewis 2011:215).

violence was used by many as a political tool at the time, including by Franklin Gowen, who blamed the miners' union, the Workingmen's Benevolent Association, for the problems (Lewis 2011:213). Although the Molly Maguires is still a contentious and debated topic (see Kenny 1998), the facts of the violence later attributed to them are undisputed: of the 16 murders attributed to the Molly Maguires, at least a third of those with identifiable ethnicities were Welsh, and an additional victim who was badly beaten but survived was also Welsh (Lewis 2011:216). The majority of those who were attacked or targeted had, in some way, wronged Irish workers, such as through laying off Irish in order to replace them with Welsh workers, giving Welsh workers better spots in which to mine coal, and other forms of ethnicity-based discrimination (Lewis 2011:216-219). Fear of the Irish, the AOH, and the Molly Maguires, in particular, became so acute that seven anthracite region Catholic priests signed a declaration in October 1874 condemning secret societies and those who violated "the commandment 'thou shalt not kill'" (Sherman et al. 1874). This fear eventually culminated in the hanging of 20 Irishmen believed to be members of the Molly Maguires and connected through witness testimonies to the murders of eight individuals (Lewis 2011).

As also occurred for the Welsh, subsequent generations of American-born Irish were eventually more successful at integrating into the US population and achieving higher social status (Library of Congress 2006a). The arrival of other migrant groups later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century ironically helped to solidify Irish as Americans as these new arrivals become an 'other' against which the Irish could argue their similarities to dominant American culture (see Jacobson 1998).

*Eastern and Southern Europeans: The Third Wave*

While the disparate experiences of the Welsh and Irish leave little cause for comparison of the two groups, the parallels in the experiences of Eastern and Southern European migrants illustrate the opposite.

Following the arrival of the Irish, Eastern Europeans were the next group to appear in the anthracite region. Polish and Lithuanian migrants began to appear in large numbers in collieries across the anthracite region between 1875 and 1880; additional immigrants followed, including Slovaks and Ruthenians. Italians began to arrive *en mass* in the anthracite region around 1895 (Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry 1915:243-244). Between 1880 and 1914, over 20 million immigrants, primarily from Eastern and Southern Europe, arrived in the United States (Zong and Batalova 2015; Matkowsky and Curra 2002:16). The migration of the Eastern Europeans was facilitated at least in part by political unrest in Europe, but the primary reason for emigration for both Eastern and Southern Europeans were economic (Greene 1968; Library of Congress 2006b; Hourwich 1922). As the Welsh and Irish workers had begun to unionize across the anthracite region, mine owners were only too happy for the arrival of these new, unorganized pools of labor (Buryk 2011). In return, the new arrivals were presented with economic opportunities that were otherwise unavailable to them in Europe: an unskilled worker in Galicia (part of modern-day Ukraine and Poland) could expect to earn \$0.12 for 14 hours of agricultural labor, while that same worker could expect \$1.20 for eight to 10 hours of work as a mine laborer (Kuropas 1991:22).

However, both of these groups experienced ethnic divisions and segregationist policies that dictated everything from work and pay to social class and upward mobility

(Roller 2013). Opinions on racial superiority became so ingrained in coal mine management by the turn of the century that geographic schemes were created to rank workers, with “native whites, Germans, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh [workers] believed to be more reliable” while “Southern Italians were considered the least desirable and dropped from the rolls at every opportunity” (Mulrooney 1989:117; Matkowsky and Curra 2002). Furthermore, the Northeastern Pennsylvanian coal mine owners succeeded in reducing the number of unions in the area by aligning class differences with ethnic differences (Wesolowsky 1996). Xenophobia and distrust would continue to undermine labor organization and resulted in ethnically-rooted, class-based violence, such as that exemplified by the Lattimer Massacre in 1897 (Shackel and Roller 2013).

Because these workers were economic migrants, migrants were typically single men who emigrated alone or with other single men. Without the responsibilities of families, the men were able to live cheaply and send their earnings back to family members in Europe (Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry 1915:243). An 1896 government report estimated that Italian immigrants alone sent between \$4 million and \$30 million earned in America to Italy annually (Library of Congress 2006b). Many migrants arrived with the sole intention of earning money and then to return to their home countries. Approximately 30-50% of Italian migrants nationally had returned to Italy at the end of five years. Men who engaged in this form of cyclical economic migration were called *ritornati* (Library of Congress 2006b). These migrants were also willing to work for less pay and in more dangerous conditions than native-born men and second wave migrants. By 1915, approximately 75% of the anthracite workforce was foreign-born, but English, German, Irish, and Scottish migrants accounted for less than 10% of employees.

Approximately 85% of the foreign-born workforce was from Eastern or Southern Europe (Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry 1915:244).

For migrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, the introduction to coal mining was often a turbulent and dangerous one. While earlier groups either had experience in mining (e.g. Welsh and Germans) or could, at the very least, understand verbal and/or written instructions and warnings (e.g. Irish)<sup>14</sup>, migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe had neither advantage. The majority of migrants were men aged 16 or over that had previously worked as farm laborers. Some migrants, accustomed to working above ground in open spaces, were ill-equipped to deal with the realities of working in dark, cramped spaces underground (Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry 1915:245). This lack of experience in mining meant that “the recent immigrant employees, usually through ignorance of mining or other working methods, have manifested a willingness to accept the alleged unsatisfactory conditions,” as well as to accept less pay to work under those conditions (Hourwich 1922:458-459). Unfamiliarity with dangerous conditions such as coal dust, fire damp, and unstable geologic formations meant that migrants were constantly at risk for explosions, fire, and roof falls. Additionally, “because of their keenness for earning money, the immigrants are often willing to work in places where more experience[d] or more intelligent men would refuse to work. For the same reasons they will frequently be satisfied with and accept mine equipment too defective for safety” (Hourwich 1922:458). Statements such as this one imply that workers are to blame, while holding harmless the companies who put workers

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<sup>14</sup> Although Gaelic was the traditional language for the Irish, by the mid-18th century, bilingualism had spread throughout the county after advocacy by the Catholic Church and British administrators (Ó Gráda 2013).



in these positions; however, the basic information that migrants were routinely exposed to more dangerous working conditions and faulty equipment when compared with their native-born counterparts highlights the dangers of the industry and the lack of regard for the safety of migrant workers. Furthermore, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (1915:245) also pointed out that many immigrants, being unable to speak English, were therefore unable to negotiate their pay with their employers, meaning that they were forced to accept whatever rate was offered. The lack of English language skills not only lowered migrants' pay, it also endangered their lives. A report from 1922 found that immigrant mine workers were often illiterate and/or could not speak English, meaning that corrections offered by mine inspectors were not heeded, verbal instructions were not followed, and posted signage about known dangers were ignored. This led the author to conclude that, although no exact statistical analyses had been done, "the figures available clearly indicate the conclusion that there has been a direct relation between the employment of untrained foreigners and the prevalence of mining casualties" (Hourwich 1922:460). This issue was compounded over time, as English-speaking miners were the majority in anthracite mines until 1890, after which a series of Eastern European ethnic groups became the predominant faction as in-migration by Eastern and Southern Europeans and out-migration by native-born and second wave migrants from the anthracite region to other parts of the country increased (Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry 1915:243-244).

The realities of migrants' lives in the anthracite region were used as fodder by anti-immigrant factions to argue for increased restrictions on migration at the federal level. Writing on the economic aspects of migration within the coal mining industry, Issac

Hourwich, ironically an immigrant from Russia himself, commented that, “The greatest of all the dangers of the new immigration... is that their employment in mine and manufactures jeopardizes the lives of American wage earners” (1922:458). In other instances, scholars voiced concern about Eastern and Southern Europeans’ ability to assimilate into American society. A 1915 report noted that the remoteness of coal mining communities from major American cities, the types of employment they were engaged in, and the distance from naturalization courts meant that migrants had a difficult time becoming naturalized citizens (1915:245). Although citizenship didn’t shield migrants from racism and mistreatment, native-born individuals and Progressive Era reformers saw it as a measure of migrants’ investment in America.

The variety of experiences within the anthracite region due to the individuals’ ethnicity and date of arrival in the country underscores the ways that certain aspects of identity can play a determinative role in defining people’s lives. The drastically different lived experiences of Welsh migrants in the anthracite region compared to later arrivals such as Italian migrants highlights the importance of adopting an intersectional approach when attempting to understand people in the past.

### *Two Company Towns*

In early 1863, a reporter for *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* published his experiences of travelling through the “great Coal Fields of Pennsylvania ... by means of the New Jersey Central Railroad” from New York City to Easton, PA, as part of a wilderness vacation itinerary. His path took him through the anthracite fields of Luzerne County in Northeastern Pennsylvania). “The whole scene is untouched by the modifying hand of

man, rugged, just as it came from God, if we except the road along which we have come, and which, as we look behind us, we can see winding its way backward and downward into the valley – the one single token of intrusive civilization” (Alden 1863:464). While the scene might have been untouched by man in the author’s eyes (or part of an attempt to sell more magazines), Luzerne county, where Eckley and Pardeesville are located, already had nearly 100,000 individuals. Although the rugged nature of the land and its inaccessibility added to its romantic portrayals in popular magazines, the anthracite region as a whole and the Eastern Middle Field in particular were already an industrial behemoth and a major player in the US energy market.

The rise of company towns in Pennsylvania was a regional expression of an international trend in industrial design and management. The two towns that this study evaluates, Eckley and Lattimer No. 2, are two of the thousands of company towns that existed in the commonwealth at the time. This section will explore the Pennsylvania context in more depth, including a deeper introduction into the architectural facets of the towns at the center of this work.

The legislation that legalized the creation and management of company towns in Pennsylvania provided the legal legitimization for a corporate practice that had been taking place for decades. In 1854, the Pennsylvania Legislature passed Act 434, which granted that “at any time hereafter when any five or more persons...may desire to form a company...for the purpose of developing and improving such mineral lands, it shall be lawful for any company formed under the provisions of this act, to construct railroads in and upon their land; also to erect dwelling houses and other necessary buildings” (Pennsylvania General Assembly 1854). This act replaced the longstanding practice that

required companies to receive legal charters from the Pennsylvania legislature. Removing this barrier to business reduced the Pennsylvania legislature's workload but simultaneously opened the floodgates for mining operations to appear seemingly overnight. Although this law granted explicit permission to build towns on private lands in order to facilitate mineral extraction, it has no language to protect individuals living and working within those towns. With little to no legal protections to shield workers from company abuses, yet explicit legal protections for the establishment of company towns, the relative values of labor and industry were codified into law by the legislature. It wouldn't be until the end of the century with the rise of investigatory journalism and a national focus on mining labor abuses spurred by strikes and labor unrest that more focus on workers' living and working conditions would arise. This was the political and social climate in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that the two company towns under analysis in this study were founded under.

Although Eckley and Pardeesville were operated by different companies, they share more common characteristics than differences. The domestic architecture within the towns is remarkably similar not only within each respective town, but also between the two towns. The company-built portions of both towns feature neat, regular plans in everything from the layout of the houses to the gridding of the lots and the placement of the roads. Both towns feature hierarchies of worker housing. The only major difference between the two towns can be attributed to their different functions that resulted in slightly different town plans. Companies often started with a single town in a given location to serve a particular mine shaft. This first, or primary, company town received the lion's share of the company's paternalistic civic services in order to attract and retain

workers (Wallace 1988:138; Roller 2015:189).<sup>15</sup> These places became the primary towns for their respective operations. As the coal mine grew, however, it often became more profitable to sink another slope rather than to lose production time travelling to and from the original shaft, or to allow a different area of the coal vein to be accessed and mined simultaneously. If the new slope was located a distance from the original town, it would require its own small number of workers' housing. To reduce costs, these additional settlements would become satellites of the original town, with residents being required to go to the original, primary settlement in order to access the services there, including picking up their pay and collecting their mail. Eckley was built as the primary town for this company, which meant that offices, the company store, schools, owners' and managers' houses, and other paternalistic services offered by the company were located in this town. Lattimer No. 2, on the other hand, was built as a satellite of Lattimer. This primary difference had tangible consequences for the layouts of the two towns.

### *Eckley*

The first European settlement within the present-day bounds of Foster Township took place in 1837 when Thomas Morrison cleared woods in the area to set up a shingle-making cottage industry. He built a saw-mill at Pond Creek (located approximately four miles from Eckley) in 1851, which was expanded through the addition of a grist mill to the site later that year by James Morrison (Pearce 1860:197). Morrison's settlement,

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<sup>15</sup> Although company towns often had at least one church, it was common practice for residents throughout the anthracite region to travel to ethnic churches that matched their own ethnic identity. These churches were often located in larger, non-company towns, such as Hazleton or Freeland, although a limited number of ethnic churches were also located in the company towns.

named Morrison, attracted other individuals to the area (Beers 1873:69, Figure 9). Some of these settlers took advantage of the abundant timber supply of the nearby Council Ridge to create wooden shingles that they then sold or traded to businesses in the nearby towns of White Haven and Hazleton (Wesolowsky 1996:30). They established a small outpost they called ‘Shingleton’<sup>16</sup> – a moniker that was still in use when coal prospectors Richard Sharpe, George Belford, Francis Weiss, William Reed, Asa L. Foster, and John Leisenring visited the area in the spring of 1854 in search of a place to open a mine (Christian 1978:13; Pearce 1860:197).

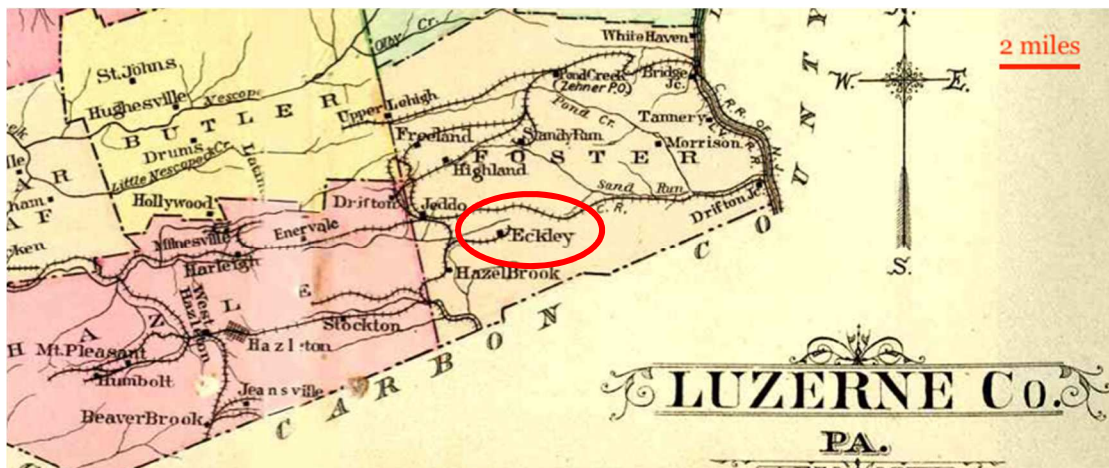


Figure 9. 1873 Beers Atlas of Luzerne County showing Eckley within Foster Township. Adapted by author.

The group of men decided the Council Ridge area was ideal for coal mining and formed a partnership. Sharpe, Leisenring and Company were subsequently granted a 21-year lease by Judge Charles Sidney Coxe with rights to mine, transport, and sell coal from a 1,500 acre tract owned by the Tench Coxe Estate in late 1853 to begin January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1854 (Christian 1978; Jordan et al. 1905). Construction began on the workers’ houses, the

<sup>16</sup> In other accounts, including the 1972 Master Plan for Eckley, the original town is referred to as ‘Shingletown’; however, the ‘Shingleton’ spelling reflected here is the earliest, most contemporaneous spelling available and comes from the 1860 Stewart Pearce tome on the history of the county. See Albert E. Peters Associates 1972; Pearce 1860.

town's hotel, and store in April 1854 ("Houses," Company Ledger 1857, series 7, box 9, microfilm roll 1, pg. 40-41, Sharpe, Weiss and Company Records [SWCR] #399, unorganized collection, National Museum of American History [NMAH], Washington, D.C.). All of the founding partners had experience in the anthracite region and the anthracite industry: Richard Sharpe had previously worked as a coal contractor for the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company; Francis Weiss was a surveyor who had worked for both the LN&C Company and as the state-appointed surveyor for Carbon County (Wesolowsky 1996:30); John Leisenring was colloquially known in Mauch Chunk as the "boy wonder of the anthracite region" and had proven himself by becoming second-in-command at the Lehigh Coal and Navigation (LC&N) Company by the age of 33 (Rottenberg 2004:39); and Asa Foster was a merchant from Mauch Chunk and namesake of Foster Township (Wesolowsky 1996:30). George Belford had previously been a LC&N employee and was elected as the first president of the Mauch Chunk Bank in 1855 (Brenckman 1913). William Reed was a long-time employee of the LC&N and served as their chief clerk at Mauch Chunk from 1852-1859 (Letterbooks 1844-1878, Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, Accession 1242, Hagley Museum and Library [HML], Wilmington, Delaware).

The first structure to be erected in the newly established venture was a steam-powered sawmill at the cost of \$7,000 (Pearce 1860:197). By the time the first load of coal had reached the surface in 1855, the mine operators had constructed the bulk of their colliery, including a breaker, a blacksmithing shop, mule barns, engine house, oil house,

and other structures (Wesolowsky 1996) (Figure 10). Additional colliery buildings, including new breakers, would be constructed at

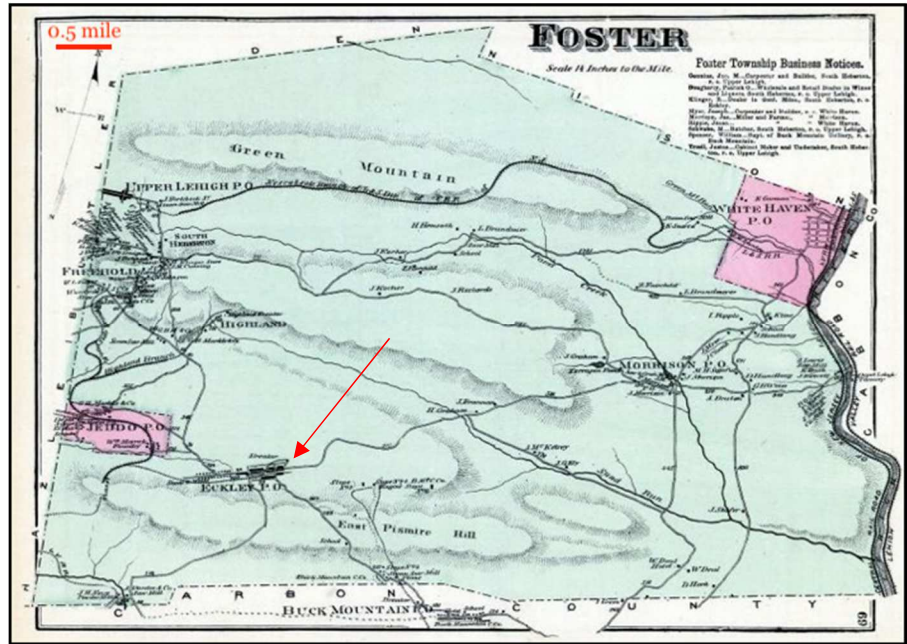


Figure 10. 1873 Foster township map with Eckley indicated by black arrow. Adapted by author.

production increased, old buildings were worn out, and new technologies created opportunities for increased efficiency and cash flow (Christian 1978:2-3).

Although progress above ground moved at a breakneck pace, progress below ground was marred by obstacles. Due to the depth of the coal vein – located beneath nearly 200’ of shale – excavation went slowly and the first shipment of coal from the Council Ridge colliery didn’t occur until October 27th, 1855 (Wesolowsky 1996). However, the men’s patience was ultimately rewarded with a 12-foot-thick vein of marketable coal (Pearce 1860). Their late start in 1855 earned them a year-end production of just 2,000 tons; however, by 1860, anthracite extraction at Eckley would reach 110,000 tons annually (Christian 1978:13).

Around 1855, the town was christened as ‘Fillmore’ in honor of the recent president (Pearce 1860; Wesolowsky 1996). However, in 1857, when the businessmen filed for a Post Office to be opened in their new village, they discovered that a town



named Fillmore already existed in Pennsylvania, preventing their town from being registered under the same name. The partners eventually settled on 'Eckley' in honor of Eckley Brinton Coxe, the 18-year old grandson of Tench Coxe (Pearce 1860).<sup>17</sup> A sizeable town was subsequently recorded in a county atlas produced in 1873 (Figure 11).

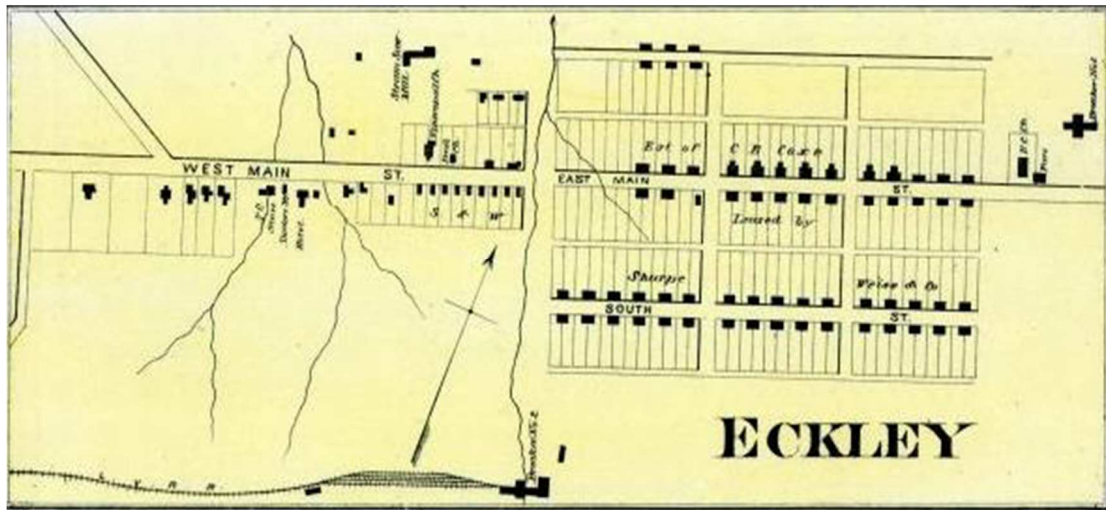


Figure 11. 1873 D.G. Beers map of Eckley

Throughout its history, worker housing in Eckley left something to be desired. Although Sharpe, Leisenring and Co. had ensured workers had shelter when mining began, bigger problems remained. The town boasted 60 double houses and 12 single residence homes after the 1870s construction boom, not including the houses of the mine operators, yet these homes offered little more than protection from rain. Extractive industries in the 19th century, in particular, were unable to predict how long operations would be financially viable at a given location, and subsequently built workers houses as cheaply as possible with the intent that they would be abandoned when the mineral supply was exhausted (Mulrooney 1989). For much, or in some cases, all, of their existence, the houses lacked insulation, electricity, running water, and plumbing. Aerial

<sup>17</sup> Other sources have suggested the town is named for Sarah Eckley, who married Col. Daniel Coxe and was the namesake of Eckley Brinton Coxe. For more on this, see Albert E. Peters Associates 1972.

photographs from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century indicate houses reached to within 750' of the coal breaker. Life here would have been loud and, without paved streets, dirty. Sewers and septic systems were not installed on Main Street until the 20th century or in the case of Back Street, never installed; instead, residents drained grey waste water directly into the unpaved streets – creating a constantly muddy and unsanitary environment (Mulrooney 1989; Wesolowsky 1996).

Dwellings sat on lots that measured approximately 200' deep and 50' wide for each half of the house. Families often took advantage of their deep lots to plant gardens and fruit trees that could sustain them cheaply (Holt 2001). All houses had shared privies and detached shared summer kitchens located behind the house. Households of upwards of 28 individuals, including immediate and extended family members and boarders, would share these dwellings (US Bureau of the Census [USBC], 1860 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. No. Foster Township, Sheet No.144-145). The company was responsible for the construction of at least some of the additions in the town's early years, although it is unknown whether the cost of these additions was borne by the tenant or the company ("Houses a/c 1862," Company Ledger 1862, series 7, box 9, microfilm roll 1, pg. 152, SWCR #399, NMAH, Washington D.C.). On the exterior of their homes, families also added concrete pads and water drainage systems, potentially as a nod to middle class sensibilities on sanitation and hygiene that emerged during the Progressive Era (Westmont 2017; Burnstein 2006). In addition to the very basic amenities provided, families often shared houses – at a steep price. A quote from Eckley B. Coxe's 1888 congressional testimony about the state of his workers' houses revealed the following:

A family, for \$4/Month, could share a four-room dwelling with three other families, two upstairs and two on the ground floor, plastered and whitewashed,

with a communal kitchen. More generous quarters could be had for \$5.50/month, the price of sharing three rooms upstairs and two down with just one other family. These units cost the company \$850 to build, and with a monthly rental income of \$11, paid for themselves, including repairs, in 6-8 years [Holt 2001:10]

Workers, therefore, not only had to contend with unsafe and unsatisfactory working conditions, but they also returned home to a house full of people, several of them likely strangers. Coxe additionally testified to the committee that a bachelor could rent “some sort of shanty” for 35 cents (Holt 2001:10; Shackel and Westmont 2014).

In 1859, John Leisenring was offered the position of Chief Engineer and Superintendent of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. He resigned from the partnership but retained his financial stake in the operation and returned to Mauch Chuck to accept the position (Rottenburg 2004). At this point, the outfit was renamed Sharpe, Weiss, and Company. Later that year, further improvements were made when the Leigh and Luzerne Railroad constructed the Buck Mountain Tunnel. This tunnel provided direct rail access from Eckley to the railroads that took coal to market. Eckley and therefore diminished transportation time and cost by eliminating the need to transport coal by mule-drawn carts to the closet railroad spur (Wesolowsky 1996).

By the time of Leisenring’s departure, approximately 130 of the new town’s worker and mine owner houses had been completed; additional buildings were constructed during this time, including two private schools (pre-1860), a company store (pre-1860), St James’ Protestant Episcopal Church (organized 1858, constructed 1859), a Presbyterian Church (1859), a Catholic Church and Rectory (1861), a “large and commodious” hotel (pre-1860), and a doctor’s office (Pearce 1860:197; Christian 1978:3-6; Wesolowsky 1996). Other independent businesses also arose around this time, including a shoe repair shop, an ice house, a butcher shop, and a tailor shop.

The churches in Eckley were arguably the most important public buildings in town. At the direction of Richard Sharpe and Francis Weiss, St. James' Protestant Episcopal Church was built in 1859 in the middle of the mine boss and contractor section of company housing (Blatz 2003). The Reverend Peter Russell, Richard Sharpe's brother-in-law, moved to the town and became the church's, and the town's, first religious leader.<sup>18</sup> Directly adjacent to the Episcopal Church was the Presbyterian Church, also constructed in 1859. Both the Episcopal and the Presbyterian churches had small congregations and were eventually torn down in 1938 and 1925, respectively (Wesolowsky 1996; Albert E. Peters Associates 1972). A Catholic Church – the primary denomination of the miners and laborers in the town – was built in 1861 along with its rectory. The Philadelphia Diocese established a mission church charter for the Eckley Catholic Church and the altar was consecrated by the sitting bishop on October 25th, 1861. Because the majority of Catholics at that time were Irish immigrants, the church became synonymous with Irish Catholics, despite never having this formal denomination. Other immigrant groups refused to attend the Irish establishment, and instead chose to travel to nearby parishes in Freeland (approximately 3 miles) every week to attend churches of their own ethnicity. St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, as the Irish Church came to be known, and its rectory still stand at Eckley today, although the original altar furniture was removed by the diocese when the church closed shortly after World War II (Christian 1978).

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<sup>18</sup> Pearce notes that St. James' clergyman was P. Russell, the total number of communicants was 24, there was no "Sunday school scholars," the total collections for the church for calendar years 1859 was \$23, and Russell's pay was \$600 for 1859. For more information, see Pearce 1860.

The period from 1860 to 1874 when the village was under Sharpe, Weiss and Company's control proved to be some of the most socially successful for Eckley. The village's population topped 1,000 individuals, managed to avoid the 'Molly Maguire' violence that broke out in the Middle and Southern coal fields, experienced comparatively fewer mining accidents than its neighbors, and strikes were rare (USBC 1870 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. No. Foster Township, Sheet No. 52-76; Wesolowsky 1996; Christian 1978; Albert E. Peters Associates 1972). Eckley continued to attract Old World immigrants newly arrived in the United States who were searching for employment and the town prospered on the hard labor of the Irish and Eastern Europeans who arrived between the 1860s and the 1920s (Blatz 2003; Holt 2001). Sharpe, Weiss, and Company also benefitted from the manufacturing windfall generated by the American Civil War when the desperate Union need for coal, compounded by the domestic need for heating and steamboat fuel, caused the price of anthracite to jump from \$3.39 per ton in 1861 to \$8.39 per ton in 1864 at docks in Philadelphia (Christian 1978:13; Wesolowsky 1996:34; Miners' Journal 1867). The coal mining operations in Northeastern Pennsylvania became so integral to the Union strategy that it changed the course of the war: Confederate General Robert E. Lee's stated purpose in marching the Army of Northern Virginia into Pennsylvania was to cut the Pennsylvania Railroad that was supplying coal to the North's foundries. Lee and the Confederates were stopped at Gettysburg, only 30 miles shy of their target – the rail connection between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh (Rottenberg 2004). Although the arrival of the Civil War was not welcome to many in Eckley, especially the Irish immigrants who traditionally backed Lincoln's opposition, the Democratic Party, over two dozen men from Eckley fought for the Union

cause (Blatz 2003). In 1861, thirty-eight men from Eckley, all laborers in the mines, joined Company K of the 81st Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, colloquially called the “Fighting Chippewas” (Mischak et al. 2010). Eckley men represented all levels of rank, including two captains, two 1st lieutenants, two 2nd lieutenants, a 1st sergeant, five sergeants, four corporals, two musicians, and at least 25 privates. Many of the men died at battles such as Spotsylvania Court House, Fredericksburg, Cold Harbor, and Antietam (Mischak et al. 2010).

H.M. Alden, writing for the September 1863 issue of Harper’s New Monthly Magazine, stopped at Eckley during his tour of the Northeastern Pennsylvanian coal fields (Figure 12). Upon observing the town, which then had already been under mining



Figure 12. Engraving of Ridge Above Eckley from 1863 Harper's New Monthly Magazine

operations for nine years, the writer noted, “Eckley itself is a vast collection of shanties – its uppermost social strata are yet to be

formed; it is a good example of the sort of town which will grow up about a colliery” (Alden 1863: 463). Although unaware that the town he was witnessing was the largest Eckley would ever be, it would still have been an impressive sight: in 1860, 130 company houses held the 1,204 individuals according to the census, and the majority of the company colliery buildings would have been standing (Christian 1978). All company

houses were painted red and featured trim painted in black, with gables, eaves, porches, and fenestrations being identically placed. This pattern not only saved money on construction costs, but also instilled a feeling of order, formality, and hierarchy, both in the inhabitants and those passing through (Wesolowsky 1996; Mulrooney 1989). What might have looked like a random scattering of houses to the Harper's Magazine reporter was actually a carefully planned town layout based on four levels of hierarchy: the houses at the western-most end of town belonged to the mine operators and are among the most ornate buildings in the town. Moving eastward, these residences were buffered from those of the workers by a collection of company buildings, including the company store, hotel, mule barn, and doctor's office. On the other side of these buildings was a series of single residence company houses that were rented solely to the mine bosses and contractors. Moving further eastward, double houses that were rented to miners spread along either side of the road, followed at last by the houses of second-class miners and mine laborers – the poorest paid and generally newest arrived immigrants in the town. The pattern had the unintended consequence of creating strong ethnic enclaves across Eckley (Warfel 1993:7). While these individuals were placed at the geographical opposite end of town from the mine owners, they would still have been required to walk through the areas of nicer houses in order to reach the company store, which was within sight of Richard Sharpe's massive Gothic Revival mansion (Wesolowsky 1996; Beers 1873).

On December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1875, the lease held by Sharpe, Weiss and Company expired, but the partnership itself was already mostly gone. William Reed had sold his interest in 1867, Francis Weiss had moved his family to Bethlehem to pursue other ventures in 1870, and Asa Foster and George Belford had died in 1868 and 1873, respectfully (Meyer

and De Wind 2003; Jordan et al. 1905:371). Instead of pursuing a new lease, Richard Sharpe and Francis Weiss chose to end their stakes in the partnership. However, John Leisenring elected to stay on at Eckley and take over the lease under a new partnership consisting of himself, John Wentz, Samuel Price, and Daniel Bertsch, Jr. They signed a 10-year lease beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1876, with the Coxe Estate and renamed the operation Leisenring and Company (Christian 1978:13).

Although the majority of Leisenring's experience was in the railroad industry, the beginnings of his tenure at Eckley was marked by bold management decisions. By this time, Leisenring had several mining interests underway in the Council Ridge area, including the Upper Lehigh Coal Company, which was located just north of Eckley and was an even more profitable operation. Lacking the time to devote himself to the Eckley property, Leisenring appointed his son-in-law, John Wentz, as superintendent at Eckley (Rottenberg 2004:44). The length of Wentz' tenure at the site is unknown. Determined to increase production at Eckley, either Leisenring or Wentz instigated hiring and construction booms shortly after gaining the lease (Warfel 1993:7). In 1876, county tax records indicate the town now featured 180 housing units (1859-1890 Tax Records, Record Group 47, Boxes 50-55, County Governments, Luzerne County, Board of County Commissions, Pennsylvania State Archives [PSA], Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.). An 1873 map of the town reveals that the nicer, higher quality, single family type workers' homes were physically separated from the double houses in the town by means of a stream that bisected the town (Christian 1978:2). Natural geography was used to reinforce the social geography of company town life. However, this changed after Leisenring took control of the town on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1876. Leisenring's vision of higher production created a need for



additional workers and places to house them. Therefore, an additional housing construction phase took place between 1876 and 1877 during which 18 residences and one additional floorplan type was added to the town (Coughlin et al. 1915; 1859-1890 Tax Records, Record Group 47, Boxes 50-55, County Governments, Luzerne County, Board of County Commissions, PSA, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.). These houses were built in close proximity to the stream, which was diverted to a man-made ditch, that had previously divided the town. Oral histories with former residents indicate that the original town planners' assessment to not place houses at this location was the correct decision, as residents of houses built at the former stream continuously battled flooded basements and pooling water (Warfel 1993). Rent was based on the size of the dwelling, although census surveys in the 1940s indicate that the company began charging different houses different rents based on the additional improvements previous tenants had made, such as additions, utilities, and outbuildings (USBC, *1930 Census*, Pennsylvania E.D. No. 40-50, Sheet No. 3A-12B; USBC, *1940 Census*, Pennsylvania E.D. No. 40-66 Sheet No. 10A-12B, E.D. No. 40-67 Sheet No. 1A-2B, E.D. No. 40-68 Sheet No. 1A-7A.). In spite of the water issues in Eckley's new houses, Leisenring's plan to boost production seem to have worked: during most of the 1870s, coal production remained at a low level at the Council Ridge mines, however, the situation improved in the early 1880s and production steadily increased (Blatz 2003:22-23). In 1884, John Leisenring died of Bright's Disease but the remaining partners elected to attempt to finish out the lease. In early 1886, the Coxe Estate re-assumed the lease on Eckley (Rottenburg 2004:xii).

By the time the Coxe Estate was managing Eckley again, the town was unrecognizable from its humble 1853 roots. In addition to the buildings mentioned

earlier, the town's population had grown to around 1,100 people residing in houses along three streets (Christian 1978:13; Blatz 2003). Eckley Brinton Coxe, under the auspices of Coxe Brothers and Company, took over operations at Eckley through a lease from the Coxe Estate on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1886 (Christian 1978:14). At age 47, Coxe had built a strong reputation and was already highly regarded by both the coal industry and the public coal market (Figure 13). He had earned a degree from the University of Pennsylvania in

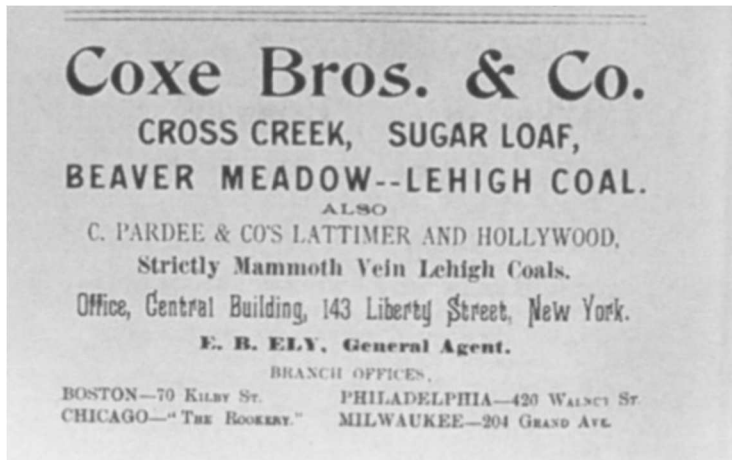


Figure 13. Coxe Brothers and Company headlining a coal ad, which also references Pardee's mining operations. From Coal Trade 1893.

mining engineering in 1858.

He followed that course of study by spending two years in Paris, France, at the *Ecole des Mines* and then an

additional year in Saxony,

Germany, at the

*Bergacademie*. Coxe then spent two years touring and observing mines and mining

practices in Britain and mainland Europe before returning to Northeastern Pennsylvania

(Bradsby 1893). Upon his return in 1865, he formed a partnership with his brothers called

Coxe Brothers and Company. The company drilled their first shaft in Drifton,

Pennsylvania, a small town located less than 5 miles from Eckley, and would continue to

lease and sublease Tench Coxe Estate land until the 1960s (Blatz 2003: 14; Holt 2001: 8).

Coxe Brothers and Company would become the largest independent anthracite producer

in the industry that was not controlled by a railroad company (Shackel and Westmont

2016).

Under Eckley Coxe's tutelage, strip mining was introduced at Eckley in 1890, despite being an uncommon method of mineral extraction in the US at that time. On June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1893, only weeks after being named a partner in Cross Creek Coal Company, Eckley Coxe began subleasing the Eckley property to Cross Creek Coal (Historical Society of Pennsylvania 2001). Cross Creek Coal immediately

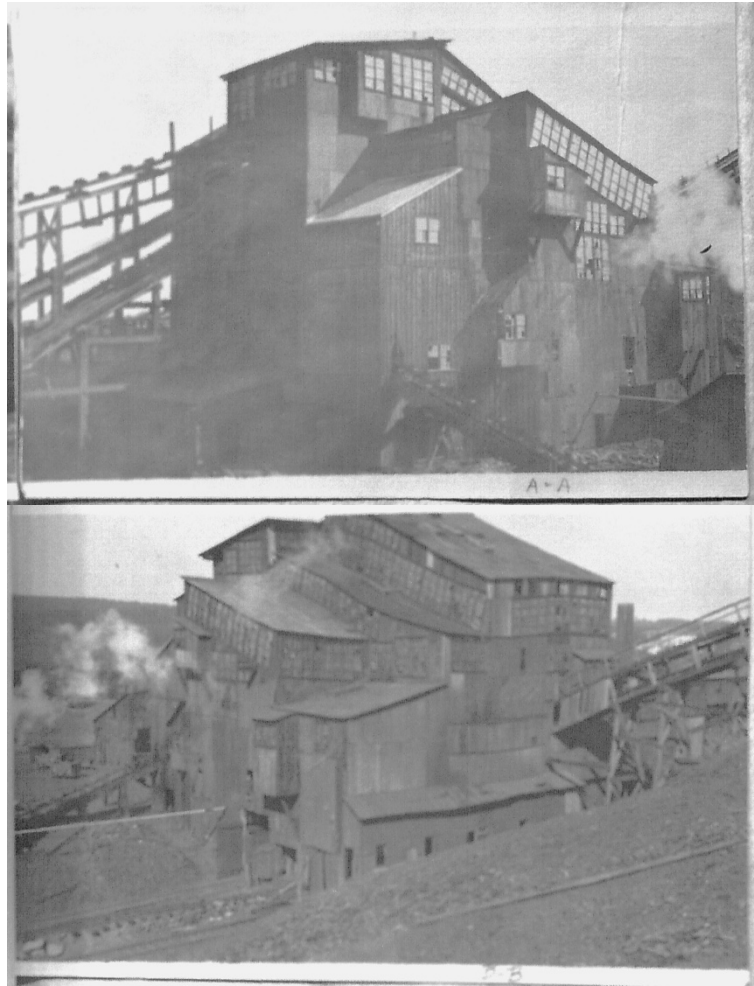


Figure 14. Eckley coal breaker circa 1915. From Coughlin et al. 1915.

constructed a new breaker at the site after receiving the lease (Albert E. Peters Associates 1972:4) (Figure 14). Cross Creek Coal changed its name to Coxe Brothers & Company, Inc., in March 1900.<sup>19</sup> Eckley Coxe died in 1895, and his brother and business partner, Alexander, sold the company's capital stock to the Lehigh Valley Railroad in 1905. This move transferred Coxe Brothers & Company, Inc.'s lease at Eckley to the railroad (Historical Society of Pennsylvania 2001). The company's emphasis on strip mining continued unabated, and by 1920, the population had dropped to less than 600 residents

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<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that Coxe Brothers and Company is a separate corporate entity from Coxe Brothers & Company, Inc. For more information, see Historical Society of Pennsylvania 2001.

(Wesolowsky 1996). Because strip mining did not require as many workers to excavate the coal, people were laid off and Eckley's population declined (Christian 1978:14; Eckley B. Coxe 1893). Additional financial pressure from other fossil fuels, including natural gas and oil, added stress to the already fragile industry (Latzko 2011:1648). As the strip mine grew, it took with it the outlying areas of Eckley, particularly the residences located on the two streets on either side of Main Street (Christian 1978:14).

Eckley's infrastructure received few updates during its time as a coal company town. Double houses shared privies, and families had to fetch water from communal hydrants into the 1920s (Wesolowsky 1996; Holt 2001). The onset of World War I saw maintenance on the workers' houses cease and major upkeep projects failed to return after the war (Christian 1978:2). Little change occurred in the town, although electricity and water were run to many of the properties during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Warfel 1993; Wesolowsky 1996:32). Company records from the early 20th century indicate that the company had spent money to upgrade the insides of the houses, including improving the cellars and plastering interior walls (Holt 2001:10); however, these upgrades appear to have bypassed the Back Street dwellings (see Westmont 2017). Sewers were not installed until the state acquired the property in 1970s (Albert E. Peters and Associates 1972). In other areas, though, the company did make improvements. Eckley was finally electrified in the early 1920s when company managers began to phase out the steam boiler that had powered the machinery for decades. However, this progress was not extended to the workers' houses: a series of correspondences from April 1923 indicate that 30 houses at Eckley had already been wired for electricity by the tenants and the general manager of Coxe Brothers & Company, Incorporated, did not believe "it would be worth while our

wiring the remaining houses” (T. Thomas to R.A. Evans - District Superintendent, letter, 25 April 1923, SWCR #399, NMAH, Washington D.C.). While the majority of the residents at Eckley remained dependent on gas and oil lamp fixtures inside their homes, the following year the company opted to install outdoor lighting. In 1924, Coxe Brothers and Co. authorized the erection of 10 street lights in Eckley village at a cost of \$1,200. Six street lights were located on Main Street as well as four on Back Street, with the placement of four additional lights in the “colliery yard”.

As profits dwindled and the company began to focus on cutting costs and was increasingly hands-off in its management strategy, Eckley itself began to fall into disrepair. In 1937, Coxe Brothers & Co. employed Jeddo-Highland Coal Company as its “operation agent to mine, prepare, and sell merchantable and mineable coal” (“Coxe Brothers & Co., Inc. and Jeddo-Highland Coal Co. Lease Indenture. April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1940, Eckley Colliery,” Coxe Brothers Collection, 1886-1935, accession #1002, National Museum of American History Archives Center [NMAHAC], Washington, D.C.). On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1940, Coxe Brothers & Co., Inc., now operating as a subsidiary of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, subleased the Eckley Colliery to Jeddo-Highland Coal Company rather than continue to oversee the site themselves. World War II brought new opportunities for anthracite coal; however, these quickly disappeared as the price of coal plummeted when federal demand decreased at the end of the war (Dublin and Licht 2005). By 1960, anthracite coal had lost 80% of its war time value. Coxe Brothers & Company, Inc. had their lease revoked by the Tench Coxe Estate in 1950, effectively causing Coxe Brothers & Company, Inc. to go out of business (Historical Society of Pennsylvania 2001). In 1957, the US Post Office removed the charter at Eckley, and the village officially ceased

to exist as an independent town (Shackel and Westmont 2016). The Tench Coxe Estate granted short leases to a series of mining concerns until they elected to divest the property in 1963 (Christian 1978:14).

That year, the village of Eckley and its colliery were sold to George Huss (Warfel 1993:6; Wesolowsky 1996). Huss operated the Buckley Coal Company at Eckley and engaged primarily in strip mining rather than shaft mining. The last shaft mine at Eckley appears to have closed in 1964, shortly after Huss acquired the property (Bonnenberger and Morris 1998). In 1968, Huss leased the entire town to Paramount Studios to serve as the set for the movie *The Molly Maguires* starring Sean Connery, Richard Harris, and Samantha Eggar. Filming occurred over the course of three months in 1968 (Altoona Mirror, 4 March 1970:52; Logan Daily News, 12 August 1968:12). The use of the town as a film set required several changes to the buildings and landscape, including burying the town's electrical lines, removal of the road pavement, rerouting of the main road, and restoration of the town's buildings to an approximation of their 1870s appearance. The film studio also built several buildings, including a model breaker and a 'company store' building. In all, the film cost \$7 million to produce (Lee 2013). Seeking to save the town following the film's production, a group of citizens organized the Anthracite Historic Site and Museum Corporation, which, in concert with the Hazleton Chamber of Commerce, purchased the land from Huss for \$100,000 in 1969. The group then donated the town to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1971 (Christian 1978:14). Under the stewardship of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the village of Eckley was opened to the public in 1972 and the museum was built in 1975 (Warfel 1993:6).

Today, Eckley is owned by the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission and operated as a history museum. Docent and self-guided tours are offered daily. The site had a visitation of approximately 11,000 in 2015 (Bode Morin, personal communication).

*Pardeesville (Lattimer No. 2)*

Ariovistus (Ario) Pardee, Jr. was born in New York in 1810 but moved to Northeastern Pennsylvania at the age of 19. Once in the region, Ario found work with a series of canal, railroad, and coal companies (Jordan 1916). While working as a civil engineer on the Beaver Meadow Railroad between 1833 and 1836, Ario met J. Gillingham Fell (Jordan et al. 1905:101). Ario and Fell joined forces in 1839 and founded A. Pardee and Company in 1840 (Jordan 1916). Pardee, believing that the anthracite veins around Hazleton were richer than was known, began leasing and buying land in and around Hazleton (Whitehead 2011; Plain Speaker [PS], 3 April 1892:3). His suspicions paid off, and A. Pardee and Co. quickly grew. Within 25 years, the company would become the largest coal operator in the Eastern Middle Coal Field (Roller 2015). Ario became a millionaire and used his wealth to build a mansion that encompassed an entire city block in Hazleton (PS, 3 April 1892:3; Roller 2015). Ario also used his wealth and influence to become a leading citizen of the town (Lafayette College n.d.) He later started several other businesses across the United States and Canada and donated a substantial sum to Lafayette College (PS 3 April 1892:3).

The Pardee family owned several collieries in the Eastern Middle Coal Field, including both Harwood and Lattimer, two towns that would be made infamous through

the 1897 Lattimer Massacre (Blatz 2003). After being declared unfit for duty and subsequently resigning from the Pennsylvania Volunteers in 1862, Calvin Pardee, Ario's son, began working for A. Pardee and Company. Calvin would work there for 22 years. During his tenure at A. Pardee and Company, Calvin joined with his brother, Ario Jr., his father's business partner, J. Gillingham Fell, and M.M. Cooper to establish Pardee Brothers Company in order to develop the Lattimer Mines operation (Bucks County Intelligencer [Doylestown, Pennsylvania], 21 March 1901). Lattimer Mines would eventually be served by three company towns. Lattimer No. 1 was first developed in 1865, and the first shipment of coal from Lattimer Mines Slope No. 1 is reported to have occurred in 1866 (Roller 2015; Foulke and Foulke 1979; Inspectors of the Anthracite Coal Region [ICMAR] 1880). Lattimer No. 2, located on the other side of the coal mine from Lattimer No. 1, was founded between 1865 and 1873 when the town first appears on a geographic atlas. An additional company town, known as Lattimer No. 3, was built to the northeast of Lattimer No. 2, although little information about it remains (references to Lattimer No. 3 include a 1897 newspaper article, but few company records exist; see Roller 2015:74). Pardee Brothers Company sunk another slope at Lattimer in 1872 (ICMAR 1872; Roller 2015:194). In 1884, Calvin Pardee left A. Pardee and Company in order to pursue his own business ventures, including his Pardee Brothers Company operations at Lattimer. Calvin continued to invest in his Lattimer properties, and in 1894, the Lattimer No. 2 breaker was converted into a washery (Freeland Tribune [FT], 21 June 1894). The wealth Calvin Pardee generated from his Pardee Brothers Company operations constituted the majority of his fortune at the time of his death in 1903.

Lattimer No. 2, today known as Pardeesville, was a secondary company town.



The company colliery, including company offices, store, and church, were located in Lattimer No. 1, the primary company town. A single road connected Lattimer No. 2 to Lattimer No. 1. An atlas from 1874 shows nine double houses in Lattimer No. 2 (Figure

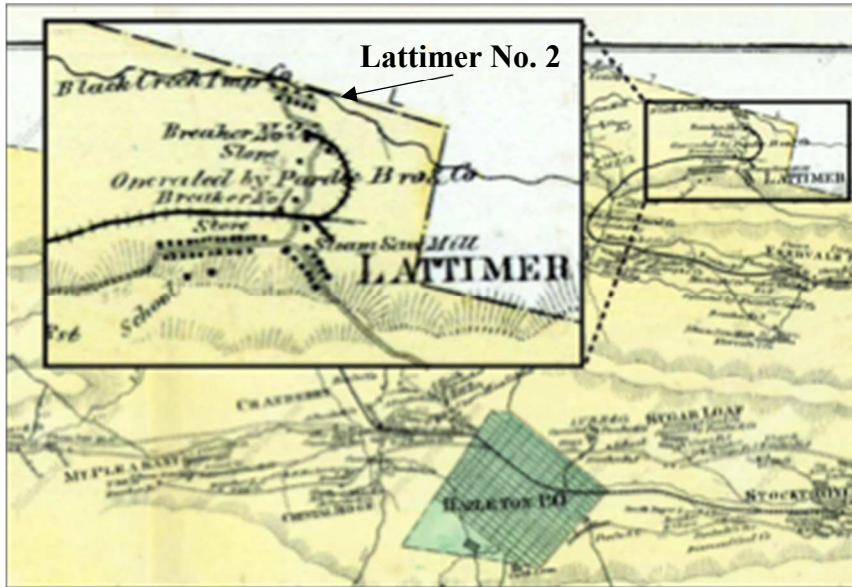


Figure 15. 1873 D.G. Beers Atlas of Lattimer Mines depicting Lattimer No. 1 and 2. Adapted from Roller 2015.

15), although a company map from 1878 shows an additional ten houses. It is unclear whether the extra ten houses were simply not included on the atlas or were actually built

in the intervening four years (Roller 2015:199). A subsequent company map from 1885 shows 21 company double houses in Lattimer No. 2. At the end of town furthest from the road to Lattimer No. 1, workers who were unable to secure housing in the limited number of company houses were allowed to rent ground from the company and construct their own houses. This area became known as the “Village” and was described historically as a “hazy mass” of shanties inhabited by Italian migrants (Roller 2015; Hambidge 1898:823). The shanty enclave was in place by the mid-1880s and residents erected their own church building, St. Nazarius Catholic church, in the center of the enclave in 1884 (Roller 2015:203). The church building had been built by workers using the same materials they had used to construct their houses on the rented ground – namely scrap wood, dynamite boxes, and items from the colliery yard (Roller 2015:219, 356). Although the church was

built in 1884, local history suggests that mass had been held in Lattimer No. 2 since 1879, with services being held in a tent made from sheets (PS, 31 July 1954:3; Roller 2015:356). St. Nazarius Catholic church was demolished in the 1950s after a new church building was constructed elsewhere in the town in 1947.

A. Pardee and Company, Incorporated's and Pardee Brothers Company's anti-union approach towards managing workers led to strife amongst the labor force and created problems for the company. In the late 1880s, Ario Pardee had made his stance on working with striking miners well known when he announced that he would refuse to negotiate with "anyone outside our employ, who knows nothing of our business" (quoted in Roller 2015:89). Calvin Pardee, like his father before him, believed that labor unions and collective bargaining posed an existential threat to businesses' ability to operate independently (Roller 2015:89). During the 1897 strike, workers' demand for pay increases, lowered prices on supplies necessary for work, and the ability to choose their own doctor rather than be forced to use the company's doctor were summarily dismissed, just as workers' demands had been dismissed during the 1880s strikes (Shackel and Roller 2013:764; Roller 2015). In response to mine operators' refusal to negotiate, 5,000 miners from across the Hazleton region sought to close mines associated with those mine operators. Striking miners from Harwood were on their way to Lattimer, the last operating Pardee Brothers Company coal mine, with the hopes of closing the mine and thereby placing "severe financial strain on the company" that would have forced the mine operators to negotiate. Instead, the miners who marched from Harwood to Lattimer were attacked by a sheriff's posse who ultimately killed 25 men (Shackel and Roller 2013). Even after the national scandal and dramatic increases in union membership in the

anthracite region that followed the Lattimer Massacre of 1897, the Pardees continued their policy of not negotiating with workers. In January of 1901, workers at Pardee and Company's Lattimer mines went on strike over the dismissal of two men. Although it is unclear whether that same strike was still in effect six months later, or whether a separate strike had broken out, the Freeland newspaper noted in July of 1901 that "the closing down of Lattimer collieries is causing much hardship in that town and many families are reported in need of provision" (FT, 1 July 1901). In another instance, the newspaper reported the mass lay off of 100 Lattimer workers in January – the time of year in which employment was hardest to find and survival more precarious as families were unable to grow food (FT, 21 June 1894). This type of management, coupled with the company's use of immigrant strike breakers, fostered resentment within the working community. Anger at the company continued into the new century, and in 1917 a mine slope at Lattimer was set on fire in an act of vandalism (Roller 2015:242). While strikes had been relatively uncommon at Eckley, strikes and disgruntled employees seem to have been a consistent theme throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries for the Pardees' Lattimer operation.

Ario Pardee died unexpectedly in 1892. His complicated relationship with Hazleton and the working class is evidenced by his varying obituaries. In the Hazleton *Plain Speaker*, Ario's obituary spoke glowing of his accomplishments, stating that, "his work, his successes, his temporary disappointments, his stupendous achievement in business enterprises... rendered him a man in a million" (PS, 1 April 1892:3). Meanwhile, the *Freeland Tribune*, a smaller newspaper with readership in the

surrounding company towns, reported on Ario's death by re-printing a column from the *Scranton Diocesan Record*:

Ario Pardee, the millionaire coal operator, was buried in Hazleton the last day of March. On the day following there was nothing to indicate that such an important person had died at all. There were no signs of mourning visible and men in conversation with each other seemed to ignore the fact of the death of the man who made millions of dollars among them but gave nothing toward the endowment of educational or charitable institutions, which might in any way benefit the poor people, who toiled and labored that his hoards might be increased. Acting under a strange impulse, one time, he gave to the Lafayette University, at Easton, \$500,000. His name, through this, may be memorialized for time but it will be only the dry skeleton of a name that might be made bright and lasting had he given half the amount to those who needed it – the poor wage workers who had the greatest claim upon his sympathy, and who may never see the outside walls of Pardee Hall, even. Ario Pardee was kindly, courteous and familiar with his slaves; but he was, nevertheless, avaricious and grasping. (FT, 14 April 1892)

The spite with which the author refers to the memory of Ario Pardee reflects a sentiment of the working class towards those who controlled major aspects of their lives. The Pardee family's routine mistreatment and heavy-handed dealings with their workers were reflected in death.

As the 20th century progressed, things continued to be bleak for Pardee Brothers Company and their Lattimer operations. The company was hit hard by the Great Depression and suffered financially for much of the 1930s. Mismanagement and other factors led the quality of Lattimer coal to drop, causing customers to refuse Pardee Brothers Company's product. The Pardee family shifted management of the company to two locals, but problems persisted and the Pardee family chose to liquidate the company's holdings in Lattimer in 1935 (Roller 2015:329). Shortly thereafter, Lattimer Coal Company took over the management of the company, although that company then declared bankruptcy in 1938 before finally shutting down entirely in 1945 (Roller 2015:330). Around the time that the Pardee family chose to liquidate their assets in

Lattimer, they turned over control of the company house in Lattimer No. 2 to Hazle Realty. Many houses were sold to their occupants, although strict covenants related to liquor and construction were placed on the deeds (see Hazle Realty Co. to George A. Berish et al. 1940). In 1938, the town's name was changed from Lattimer No. 2 to Pardeesville and the community was granted a post office (Roller 2015).

### *Properties Included in this Study*

This study draws on the archaeological and architectural findings from five domiciles, four of which are located in Eckley and one in Pardeesville. These five houses are presented in this dissertation as representations of larger trends within anthracite company towns across the region, including in the varied experiences and goals of working families. Therefore, understanding these five households in depth, including establishing the patterns of occupancy, will strengthen assertions about the replicability of these families' experiences to a broader demographic. However, because these houses were rental properties, it is important to keep in mind that the historical information provided here is not complete. The earliest confirmable residents for the houses in Eckley date to 1917 or 1920, although families had been living in the houses since at least the mid-1850s. Additionally, because only the foundation remains of double houses 34/36 Back Street and 38/40 Back Street, historical information and extant comparable

structures were used to furnish architectural information about those houses (Figure 16).

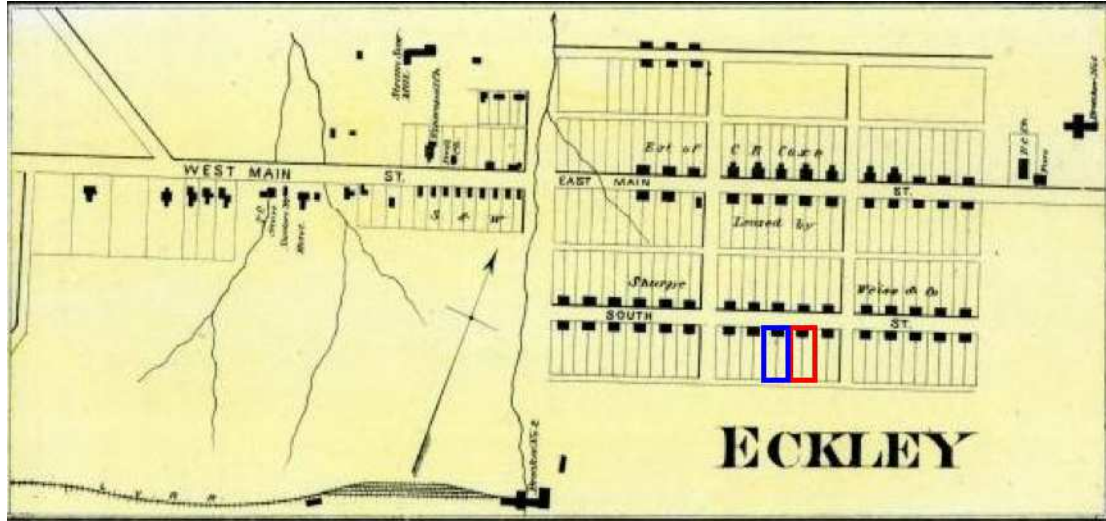


Figure 16. 1873 D.G. Beers map of Eckley with the location of the four mine laborers' houses investigated in this study marked. 34/36 is in blue and 38/40 is in red.

### *34 Back Street, Eckley*

The first documented residents of 34 Back Street were the Draganoski family.

Interestingly, the head of the household was a woman named Mary. Mary was a 34 year old widow who had immigrated to the US in 1902 but was not naturalized by 1920. Mary was from Czechoslovakia, was able to write but not able to read, and did not speak English.<sup>20</sup> Her mother tongue was Slovak. Mary was reported as not working. Living with Mary were two sons and a daughter: Joseph, age 16, Anna, age 12, and Andrew, age 10. All three children were born in Pennsylvania. All three were able to read, write, and speak English. Anna and Andrew had attended school in previous year, but Joseph had not. Joseph was reported as working as a silk hand in a silk throwing mill (USBC, 1920 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 50, Sheet No. 8A). The Draganoski family were also living in

<sup>20</sup> All countries of origin stated here are taken directly from the census. Although Eastern Europe experienced intense restructuring during this era and places changed names, I have not attempted to correct any places of origin.

Eckley in 1910, at which point John, Mary's husband, was still alive. John was 32 in 1910 and worked as a laborer in the breaker (USBC, 1910 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 29, Sheet No. 18A).

The Draganoski family (now spelled Draganoskie) was still living at 34 Back Street in the 1930 census. Mary did not work, but Joseph and Andrew were still living with her. Joseph, aged 26, worked as a teamster in the coal mine, while Andrew, age 21, worked as a laborer in the coal mine. Both were single. The household did not own a radio and they paid \$5.00 in rent per month (USBC, 1930 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 40-195, Sheet No. 3A).

By 1940, Andrew Draganosky was the head of household, although his mother, Mary, lived with him and his wife, who is also named Mary. Andrew had an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education and worked as an outside laborer in the coal mines. His income for the previous year was \$850. Mary, Andrew's mother, was now listed as being from Austria-Hungary and as having no formal education. Mary, Andrew's wife, was a 29 year old woman with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education. She was reported as having lived in Freeland in 1935. She did not work. She was identified in the census as having been born to a Czechoslovakian father and an American mother. Further, the census reveals that she had been married since she was 19 but had not had any living children (USBC, 1940 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 40-68, Sheet No. 3A).

### *36 Back Street, Eckley*

The earliest confirmed resident of 36 Back Street was Albert Manerka. In 1917, Manerka was a 29 year old coal miner from Russia. He was a citizen of Russia and had a wife,

although it is unclear whether she was in the US or in Russia (US Selective Service, World War I Draft Registration Cards 1917-1918, Pennsylvania, Luzerne, Roll No. 1894014, Draft Board 10, Order No. 56, Card 37-4-21.A).

By 1920, Albert Manerka had been replaced by the Senick family, which consisted of Michael Jr., age 23, Mary, age 19, and Veronica, age seven months. Michael had been born in Pennsylvania to Czechoslovakian parents, while Mary had emigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1909 and had been naturalized. Both were able to read and write and speak English. Michael worked as a miner in the coal mines (USBC, 1920 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 50, Sheet No. 8A).

By 1930, a new family was residing in the house. The Flatko family consisted of Frank, Ella, and their son Francis. Frank was a 31 year old laborer in the coal mines who was born in Pennsylvania to Czechoslovakian parents. Ella was a 28 year old woman who was born in Pennsylvania to Czechoslovakian parents. She was not reported as working. Francis was two years old and was born in Pennsylvania. The Flatkos owned a radio set and paid \$5.00 per month in rent (USBC, 1930 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 40-195, Sheet No. 3A).

In 1940, the Flatko family were still living at the house, although their name was now spelt Faletko. We learn that both Frank and Ellen had an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education. Frank now worked as an outside laborer in the coal mines and had only worked 21 hours in the previous work week. His total income for the previous year was \$950. Francis was now 12 years old, and two more sons had joined the family: Albert, age 7, and Joseph, age one month. Albert and Francis had both attended school in the previous year. Rent in 1940



had increased to \$6.00 per month (USBC, 1940 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 40-68, Sheet No. 3A).

*38 Back Street, Eckley*

Little is known about the occupants of house #38/40 prior to the 1920 Census; however, some information has been gleaned from World War I draft registration cards (Figure 17). John Wickies was a 28 year old miner for the Coxe Brothers Company living in House #38 on June 5, 1917. Originally from Russo-Poland, John Wickies had declared his intention to become a US citizen in 1916. He reported having a wife and one child, although it is unknown whether they were in the US or Europe. Also unknown is whether Wickies was a boarder in House #38 or whether he was renting from the company (US Selective Service, World War I Draft Registration Cards 1917-1918, Pennsylvania, Luzerne, Roll No. 1894014, Draft Board 10, Order No. 45, Card 27-4-21.A).

The figure displays two documents related to John Wickies' World War I draft registration. The left document is Form 1058, 'REGISTRATION CARD', dated June 5, 1917. It contains the following information: Name in full: John Wickies; Age in yrs: 28; Home address: 38 Back Street, Eckley, Pa.; Date of birth: June 22, 1888; How you came to this country: Declaration in 1916; Where you were born: The Low, Russo Poland; If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? None; What is your present trade, occupation, or office? Miner; By whom employed? Coxe Bros. Co.; Where employed? Eckley, Pa.; Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a person under 18, solely dependent on you for support? wife and one child; Married or single? Married; Race (specify which)? Caucasian; What military service have you had? None; Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? None. The card is signed by John Wickies. The right document is the 'REGISTRAR'S REPORT' for Card 27-4-21. A, signed by J. C. Hesse, District Registrar, Luzerne County, Pa. It includes physical descriptions: Tall, medium, or short? Tall; Slender, medium, or stout? Slender; Color of eyes? Gray; Color of hair? Light Brown; Build? Medium; Has person lost arm, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled? None. It is signed by J. C. Hesse and J. W. Hesse.

Figure 17. John Wickies' World War I draft card.

By 1920, three years after John Wickies' draft registration card, a new occupant is residing in House #38. William Wash, a widowed, 63-year-old blacksmith, is reported in the census as living alone. Little is known about William Wash either before or after his

time in Eckley, although it is possible that he is the individual of the same name who died in San Joaquin, California, in 1926 at the age of 67 (USBC, 1920 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 50, Sheet 8A).

By 1930, William Wash, the occupant of House #38, had been replaced by George and Mary Ondeck and their five children. In the 1920 Census, prior to moving to #38, the Ondecks had resided at #9 Back Street. Their rent was reported as \$5 per month, and they did not own a radio set. George, 37, worked as a coal miner while Mary, 32, was not recorded as holding a job. Both were the children of Czechoslovakian immigrants, although they denied speaking Slovak in their childhood. They had been married for 11 years. George and Mary's children included Cecelia, 10, George Jr., 8, Dorothy, 6, Emma, 3 years 4 months, and Beatrise, 26 months. Cecelia, George, and Dorothy all attended school and were able to read and write (USBC, 1920 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 50, Sheet No. 6B; USBC, 1930 Census, Pennsylvania E.D 40-195, Sheet No. 3A).

In 1940, the Ondeck family was still residing at #38. George, then 46, reported an income of \$1000 for the entirety of 1939. He continued to work as a miner. Cecelia had moved out of the house and another son, Andrew, had been born in 1931. It is recorded that George had a 6<sup>th</sup> grade education, while Mary had finished the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. All children were attending school, although 16-year-old Dorothy was only in 7<sup>th</sup> grade (USBC, 1940 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 40-68, Sheet No. 3A).

#### *40 Back Street, Eckley*

The first confirmed family in House #40 was the Chiban family, who were recorded as residents in the 1920 Census. The Chibans included Thomas, 25, and Sophie, 24, as well

as their two sons, John and Bernard. Thomas Chiban worked as a miner. He came from Galicia, spoke Polish, and was a resident alien, having immigrated to the United States in 1912. Sophie is not recorded as working, was also originally from Galicia, spoke Polish, and was an alien resident who immigrated in 1913. John was 2 and a half years old, while Bernard was only 4 months. Both boys had been born in Pennsylvania (USBC, 1920 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 50, Sheet No. 8A).

The Chiban family had left by 1930 and been replaced by the Charnigo family. George and Mary Charnigo rented their house for \$5 per month and did not own a radio set. George, 36, was a coal miner, while Mary, 29, is not listed as having a job. The couple had four children: Agnes, 7, Joseph, 4, Thomas, 30 months, and Irene, 1 month. Agnes was attending school and was able to read and write. The Charnigos had been married for 9 years and were both the children of Czechoslovakian immigrants, although they reported speaking English in their childhood homes. All children had been born in Pennsylvania (USBC, 1930 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 40-195, Sheet No. 3A).

By 1940, the occupants of House #40 had been replaced by Michael, Julia, and Kathleen Jurbella. Both Michael and Julia were 28 and from Pennsylvania. Michael and Julia had finished the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and the first year of high school, respectively. Michael worked as a road man for the coal mines and had earned \$1000 in the previous year. Their daughter, Kathleen, 4, had not yet started to attend school (USBC, 1940 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 40-68, Sheet No. 3A).

*217 Lower Street, Pardeesville*

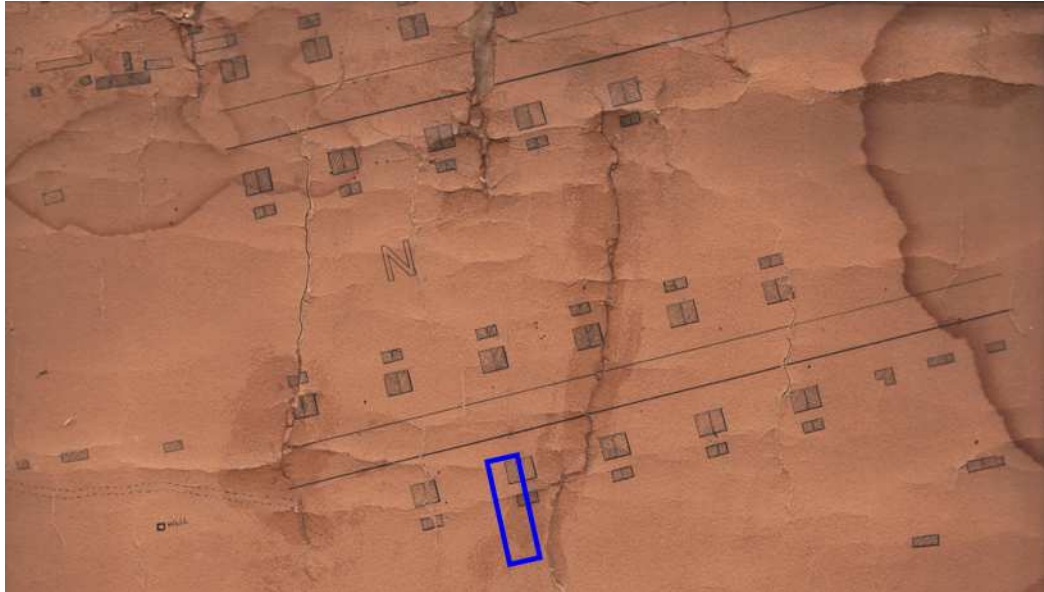


Figure 18. 1885 Map of Pardeesville with 217 Lower Street marked in blue.

The earliest residents of 217 Lower Street (Figure 18) confirmed through census records appear in the 1920 census. In that year, the house is occupied by the Yannuzzi family. Ralph, a 37 year old man from Italy, and his wife, Victoria, a 21 year old woman also from Italy, rent the house. Both are naturalized US citizens (Ralph emigrated in 1886 and was naturalized in 1904, Victoria emigrated in 1908 and was naturalized in 1911) and speak English. Ralph can read and write and works as a laborer in the coal mines. The couple have seven children: Millie, 16; Sophia, 14; Josephine, 10; Dominick, 9; John, 7; Frances, 5; and Rose, 1 year and 7 months. All of the school-aged children are reported as having attended school in the previous year. Millie works as a sewer in a shirt factory (USBC, 1920 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 60, Sheet No. 2B).

The Yannuzzi family is still in the house in the 1930 census. The house is still rented and we learn that their monthly rent is \$3.75. Millie and Sophia have moved out, and a new child, Anna, 8, has been born, bringing the total to eight children. We also

learn that Ralph was 20 and Victoria was 16 at the time of their marriage. Ralph is now working as a coal miner. Josephine, now 20, is working as a button sewer in a shirt factory, while Dominick, now 18, is working as a slate picker in a coal breaker. Additionally, John, 16, is working as a laborer in a wholesale fruit market (USBC, 1930 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 10, Sheet No. 1A).

The final census available, the 1940 census, shows that the Yannuzzi family was still living in the house. Ralph and Victoria now own their house, which is valued at \$600. Ralph is now working as laborer at the coal mine. Only two children, Rose and Anna, remain at home; neither are working. This census also reveals that Ralph and Victoria have no formal education, while Rose only attended through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Anna, despite being 18, is reported as never having attended school. The census also reports Anna as being unable to work, indicating that she might have some sort of physical or mental disability (USBC, 1940 Census, Pennsylvania E.D. 40-90, Sheet No. 12B). On Ralph's World War II Draft Registration Card, Ralph is revealed to be from Toreria, Italy, and is working as an employee of the Lattimer Coal Corporation in 1942. (US Selective Service, World War II Draft Cards for the State of Pennsylvania, 1942, Record Group No. 147, Series No. M1951).

### Conclusion

These historical settings – of migration, of company towns and paternalism, or the development of the anthracite region, and finally of the two towns that will be explored in this study – provide the social and geographical context for the rest of the discussion presented in this dissertation. Migrants who found themselves in the anthracite region of

Pennsylvania during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were likely not privy to the historical trends presented here related to rapid exploitation (of both land and workers), to corporate dedication to profit above all else, or to widespread racial and ethnic discrimination. The unique converging cultural histories that comprise the anthracite region show that migrants arrived in an environment in which they were both vitally necessary for the continued functioning of the industry and yet simultaneously detested by the native-born population as well as other groups of migrants. In order to understand the development of intersectional identities at home in the anthracite region, it is also necessary to understand the unique social histories of the region, particularly its lack of large, established communities and the transient, temporary, and unstable nature of the industry that supported the entire region. Northeastern Pennsylvania's cultural history attests to its settlement as an arm of capitalist production, a factor that shaped the experiences of workers' families as they sought to carve out space for social attainment and self-definition amidst a backdrop of worker replaceability and migrant dehumanization.

This chapter also reflects the types of histories that have frequently been written about coal and migration: devoid of women or acknowledgements of gender. The dominance of the region's industrial history in retellings of the development of the area, with its focus on the achievements of men and men's work, easily eschews or minimizes feminine perspectives. While this chapter has provided the customary historical perspectives on the history of coal mining in the region, the history of migration to the anthracite region, and the histories of the two company towns analyzed in this research, the rest of the dissertation will seek to re-incorporate women into these types of

narratives by presenting a history of women's intersectional identities at home in anthracite company towns.

### Chapter 3. Mothers, Ministers, Managers, and Matrons: Women's Roles in Anthracite Company Towns

“Women's labors and success in the various fields and affairs of life, are calling daily for more and more attention. But while we admire her in her new role, with her efforts toward success in society, literature, science, politics and the arts, we much not lose sight of her most divine and sublime mission in life – womanhood and motherhood” (Melendy 1901:7)

#### Introduction

On a hill overlooking the anthracite town of Ashland, Pennsylvania, sits a monument unlike any other in the world. At the top of a double set of stone staircases built by the Works Progress Administration sits an eight-foot tall bronze sculpture atop a three-ton block of granite depicting the central figure of James McNeil Whistler's 1871 painting, “Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1,” more commonly known as Whistler's Mother. The so-called Mothers' Memorial was commissioned by the Ashland Boys' Association in 1937 to honor all mothers in the United States. It was dedicated on Sunday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 1938 (Adams 2009). Emblazoned in carved capital letters across the granite pedestal are the words “Mother. A mother is the holiest thing alive,” an adaptation of a line from a Samuel Taylor Coleridge poem. While the Mothers' Memorial is largely unknown outside of anthracite region (and possibly outside of Ashland), the message it promotes serves to both bolster women's visibility within the history of the anthracite region as well as obscure it. Women in anthracite company towns were mothers; however, they were also expected to fill roles as household and small business managers, spiritual guides, family accountants, support networks, wage and piecemeal workers, and models of proper class-defined femininity, amongst others. This chapter explores four specific roles that women in anthracite company towns were expected to fulfill – that of mothers,



ministers, managers, and matrons – and the ways that women embodied and performed these variety of roles throughout their lives.

Although the first research question in this dissertation focuses on material culture and identity expression, it is also important to address the social ideologies that imbue material culture with meaning. Understanding the social landscapes created by ideologies that sought to regulate women's virtue, up to and including their appearance, is necessary for being able to understand the deeper meanings and intentions behind consumption of certain objects. Because many of these identity-based acts of consumption, such as the act of giving girl children porcelain tea sets, were rooted in deeper (but not always apparent) identity performances that were direct outgrowths of ideologies related to the performance of middle and upper class femininity. Therefore, in order to discuss the ways that material culture was used by women in company towns to express their identities, I will also discuss the larger ideologies that support that materials' interpretation.

This chapter will begin with a review of the construction of culturally-defined genders and gender roles, including exploring the ways that these social prescriptions become reified through action. I will then use four examples of women's gender roles to illustrate the ways that material culture, embodied beliefs, and habitualized actions served to create aspects of women's identities. For women's roles as mothers, I will draw on archaeologically-recovered children's toys and school supplies to discuss women's responsibilities related to economic survival, as well as recovered condom tins and Clorox bottles to discuss women's autonomy with regards to family planning. My discussion of women's roles as ministers will draw on observations from oral histories

and interviews conducted in the anthracite region which will be supported by religious-themed artifacts recovered from domestic contexts in Pardeesville and Eckley. Women's roles as household managers draws from women's responsibilities under popular gendered literature of the time in addition to artifacts

### *The Social Construction and Performance of Gender Identity*

Gender, like all forms of identity, is not real. Gender is a form of social constructivism, meaning that definitions of gender are socially created within a specific social context; this means that definitions of gender can shift over time because the form of identity is actually only an "account of reality produced collaborative by a community of knowers" (Marecek et al. 2004). Although biological differences between sexes exist, the primary form of gender differentiation in Western societies – men and women– exist as social constructions based loosely on biological sex but that are more concretely related to socialized notions of masculinity and femininity.<sup>21</sup> Because gender is not an inherent state of being, but rather a series of culturally-agreed-upon definitions, the concept is fluid. Under this logic, then, gender does not exist within a vacuum, but is instead a series of assessments of actions and behaviors that are judged subjectively in terms of culturally defined, mutually accepted criteria as being degrees of feminine or masculine (see Fenstermaker and West 2002). This means that gender is fundamentally a performance, since gender is judged (usually as a binary) as a collection of traits, behaviors, and

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<sup>21</sup> Butler (1990:9) also calls into question the unproblematic presentation of binary sex by asking what the history of the concept is and suggesting that sex is equally as discursively created within society as gender is, thereby implying that the relationship between gender and sex is not one-way, but instead the two categories reify each other.

appearances rather than existing as a standalone concept. However, because structures within society both produce and normalize gender and gender roles by presenting them as innate identities rather than culturally created categories, notions of genders are accepted within society without question as both a fact and a bounded subject (Butler 1990). Stated simply, “one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one,” with the concept of ‘woman’ being accepted as an objective, positivist ‘truth’ (Beauvoir 2009[1949]). Because gender is culturally defined, it also becomes impossible to separate gender from the “political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (Butler 1990:5).

When looking at the construction of ‘woman’ and femininity, in particular, several scholars note that the presence of such a definition exists only in relation to its binary, the cultural standard of masculinity, which casts women and femininity as an ‘other’ or an aberration from the norm (see Beauvoir 2009[1949], Ortner 1972, Wittig 1980); other scholars take this concept even further to state that dominant discourses not only do not provide room for women as an ‘other’, but do not provide room for women at all within the discourse of the Subject (see Irigaray 1985, Whitford 1991). These theorists also illuminate the relationship between bodies and gender, with masculinity’s universality granting it freedom from corporeality while femininity is largely mapped onto and contained within physical bodies (Butler 1990:16; Beauvoir 2009[1949]). This societal double standard is demonstrated through the lived experience of gender. Further, these differences in the social performance and embodiment of gender between men and women begins in childhood: young boys are encouraged to explore and play while young girls are encouraged to treat themselves as dolls, as “a passive object” (Beauvoir

2009[1949]:306). Beauvoir suggests that these differences in lived experience can be distilled to the central point that women's bodies are lived in for the gaze of others, which is itself a taught, not biological or natural, occurrence.

It is from these theoretical differences in the social constructions of the concepts of men and women that a broader discussion on gender performance and gender roles can be parsed. Drawing on a phenomenological tradition that connects how mundane acts constitute the social reality of social actors, Butler (1988:519) explains that "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*." It is through these repetitions of mundane acts and the performative nature of these acts for a social audience that both the performer and the audience come to accept the performer's gender identity. However, because these acts are individual instances strung together over time rather than a cohesive, unbroken lifeway, Butler (1988) argues that, phenomenologically, gender is then a series of constituting acts that follow social sanctions and not an identity at all. Instead, Butler, drawing on Beauvoir, states that "to be a woman is to have *become* a woman, to compel the body to conform to an historical idea of 'woman,' to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to an historically delimited possibility, and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal project" (1988:522, emphasis in original).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Butler is also clear to state that although 'project' makes it sound as though the performer has a choice, complying with gender norms is necessary for cultural survival and should be read more as a strategy for survival than as a project because of the steep costs associated with failing to live up to expected gender performances

In this way, external gender identity becomes a measure of one's ability to carry out a series of gendered tasks and performances. Gender becomes an activity, as it can only be judged when a performance of gender-associated tasks is on-going. (West and Zimmerman 1987). During these performances, individual activities are judged by others (the audience) as more or less "masculine" or "feminine" based on the agreed upon gender roles of society. Therefore, the commission of these acts is not done as an outgrowth or a representation of an identity, but rather these acts serve to create the identity (Butler 1990).

These acts feed into a system of gendered categorizations that people are socialized into as young children and which continue to grow and become more refined throughout adolescence (Martin et al. 1990). Gender stereotypes provide a matrix by which members of a society organize their ideas about which behaviors and characteristics pertain to each sex gender (Del Boca and Ashmore 1980). Deaux and Lewis (1984) have extended this idea by also including gender labels as well as content-specific beliefs that are directly related to gender. Context-specific beliefs include aspects of performance that can have either feminine or masculine connotations, specifically those relating to role behaviors, occupations, traits, and physical appearances. In all cases, these stereotypes or connotations that connect one gender to a specific way of looking and doing are socially defined and mutually agreed upon. Further, these associations between gender and activity can change as the cultural negotiations that underpin understandings of what defines a gender also change.

Even though people are introduced to these gendered, socially-expected behaviors at a young age, why do they continue to practice them into adulthood and perpetuate

them for their children? For the answer to this question, I refer to Bourdieu (1984) and his concept of habitus. Because these messages about gendered stereotypes and ‘proper’ gender performances are transferred to children from a young age, they become part of their ingrained, natural-feeling habitus, rather than the outcome of cultural grooming. Because individuals are brought up with this set of behaviors and the value systems linked to those behaviors, changing or abandoning the system entirely can become extremely difficult or nearly impossible, which leads people to perpetuate these cycles and patterns of behaviors. Although Bourdieu used the concept of habitus heavily in his work with social class and taste-preferences amongst French citizens, his observations on the ways that culturally-defined categories can become embedded within people’s sense of self readily applies to the case of gender.

While Bourdieu intimates that social identities, including gendered roles, can be swept up into one’s habitus and subsequently indulged in for the remainder of an individual’s life without significant critical enquiry, there are also those who successfully turn gendered performances and gendered expectations into power. This discussion of gender is important not only for better understanding the social and individual consequences of a cultural ideology, but also because adherence to or defiance of gender norms factors into a broader negotiation of power within American and Western societies. More than simply discussions of male or female, gender represents another form of unequal access to power and the ways that respectability and performance could be used to gain greater access to increased levels of autonomy and self-determination.

Although identity is a constellation of difference forms and types of group- and self-identifications, gender identity, in particular, is closely related to the cultural

opportunities open to an individual. Obeying gender norms, especially those aimed at upper class women, provided individuals with social respectability that could be leveraged in society in other ways. Upper and, later, middle class women were able to weaponize their positions as ‘proper’ ladies (a confluence of both gender and class identities) in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries when upper class women’s roles were being increasingly confined within the home to wrestle control of domestic processes and gain influence as masters of the home. Others were able to use this newly created position to gain control of household finances and the status of ‘mistress’ of house (Fox-Genovese 2000, Branca 1975). For working class women, however, who were able to abide by the class and financial obligations of upper class women, obeying gender norms did not provide opportunities as much as it provided freedom from social isolation. Working class women who did not obey gender norms, such as through premarital pregnancies or performing sex work, could be actively discriminated against and therefore limited in their social options. The eventual criminalization of sex work during the Progressive Era was an intentional act to attempt to force women into obeying middle class women gender standards (Lucas 1995:47). In this way, gender identity and performance could be both a weapon for achieving greater power when done well as much as it could be a weapon to castigate women who did not embody society’s dictates – both indications of one’s power within society.

Although these definitions of gender roles seem immovable, women’s social expectations change regularly as broader cultural changes take place in society. I will briefly discuss the role of women within the family and the shifting definition of the

family as an economic unit in America generally during the course of the century that this study encompasses.

### *Transfer of Gendered Ideas*

Although the transfer of social, gender, and class-based ideals and trends for women in working class communities was obviously occurring throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, less information is available about *how* these ideas were being transferred. Because working class women did not have the same levels of literacy as their middle and upper class counterparts, and because many of the women in the anthracite region were immigrants for whom English was a second language, the diffusion of cultural knowledge did not necessarily take a direct route. Examining the cultural practices of the time provides more information on how these ideas were transferred, curated, and reinforced within the social scene of the anthracite region.

The majority of advice for women pertaining to housekeeping, child-rearing, dress, and consumption habits was transferred through written sources. Magazines, newspapers, store catalogs, interviews with ‘professionals’, fictional stories, and other forms of print media provided guidelines for women on how to properly carry out their responsibilities according to class and ethnic standards (McCracken 1986). For women who were able to read, popular publications such as *Godey’s Ladies Manual*, *Peterson’s Magazine*, and *Woman’s Journal* provided regular periodicals that offered women information on everything from political issues to time-saving housekeeping tips to advice on popular clothing styles and how to replicate them (Jolliffe 1994, Beetham



1996). Picking up on the popularity of these publications, local newspapers also began including columns specifically geared towards women, with sections including information on new trends in fabrics and designs, novelties

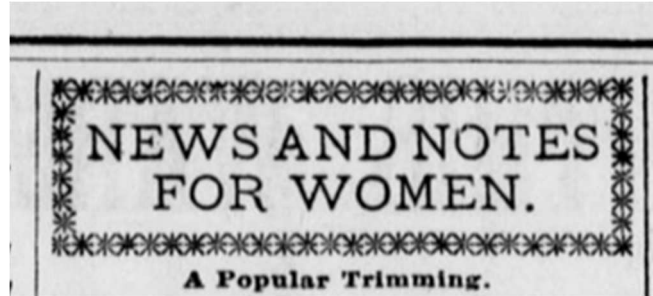


Figure 19. Heading of Women's Section of the Freeland Tribune in 1899.

seen in local shops, gossip on nationally-known figures, and popular accessories for each season (e.g. FT, 17 August 1899:3, Figure 19). For women who were unable to read, however, the transfer of ideas involved socializing and knowledge sharing, often in formal, purposeful settings.

As middle and upper class women became increasingly confined to the household through the 19<sup>th</sup> century and as housework was increasingly being mechanized, women began to organize local women's clubs. These clubs provided women with a social outlet in which they could discuss home making, self-help, literature, and other topics, which "even without broad academic education [allowed] them to busy themselves in their own development" (Bowden 1930:257). These social organizations eventually became popular amongst working class women as well, although organizers made it clear that these clubs were intended to offer "an opportunity" for working class women to develop a "responsible, independent personality capable of self-determination and worthy of respect", indicating a slight shift in goals from the middle and upper class women's groups (Reitano 1984:134).

Middle class reformers were particularly concerned about immigrant women's ability to 'properly' raise their children. To address this perceived gap, reformers recommended that women in the anthracite region arrange "mothers' meetings" to share

“practical hygiene and the elements of sanitary science” with women of the area (Roberts 1904:140). These groups were likely present in the anthracite fields. An article originally printed in *Harper’s Bazaar* that was reprinted in 1893 in the *Freeland Tribune* proclaimed the benefits of participation in a women’s group, including that it could give inspiration to members and act as a training school. Although the article itself is short, the class-based undertones are undeniable, including mentioning that women’s clubs can “teach her the value of silence... [and] the propriety of having her thoughts in hand before she seeks to give them expression” (FT, 19 June 1893:3, Figure 20). These notions

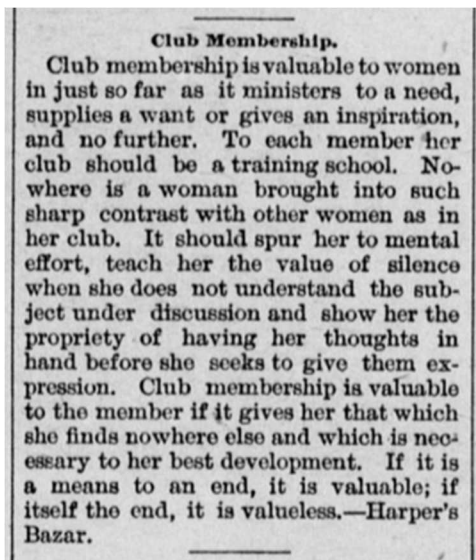


Figure 20. Article on the value of women's participation in Women's Club. From *Freeland Tribune* 1893.

of regulating women’s behavior coincide with upper class values that sought to paint women as meek and quiet.

Although we have no direct evidence for the presence of women’s groups or for women’s participation in these groups at Eckley, the multiple references to women’s groups in the *Freeland Tribune* indicates that the phenomenon had penetrated into the anthracite region and was taking place within the newspaper’s circulation.

### *American Women’s Roles in the Household, 1854-1940*

The rise of industrialization fundamentally changed the structure of the Western family. Prior to industrialization, families were an economic unit that often included unmarried adult children and extended family members. Typically based in agricultural production,

the familial economic unit relied on high fertility rates to counteract high infant mortality rates to produce workers for the family's economic endeavors. Husbands typically (but not always) directed the economic activity; women maintained roles caring for children as well as economic contributors themselves (Thornton 1985:382; Vanek 1980). Children also contributed to these economic and productive activities within the home. Children continued to contribute to the family economy into adulthood and did not achieve independence until they acquired enough capital to create their own economic unit (their own family) or the parent who controlled the family's economic activity died (Katz and Davey 1978; Thornton 1985). School attendance was not necessary for a family's economic productivity and subsequently rates of education were low within the general population. These pre-industrial lifeways likely broadly typify the types of situations European migrants would have experienced prior to arriving in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The introduction of industrialization ended the supremacy of the household production economy and, with, it the role of the family as the primary economic unit. Instead, the family wage economy in which individual members of the family worked outside the home gained traction (Hareven 1982). The old method of economic production (and family organization) was entirely upended as "fathers, who had always specialized primarily in economic production, followed the economic opportunities outside the home, and young adult sons and daughters also became active in the new wage economy" (Thornton 1985:382). In this new productive format, women, who remained in the house because of their continued child raising responsibilities, lost economic opportunities and, therefore, economic power within the family. However,

working class families often could not manage financially in this new paradigm, and so women continued to produce goods at home (Kessler-Harris 1982). ‘Given-out’ work, in which workers were provided with the raw materials of a product that they then assembled in their homes and returned for a piece rate, had lost value by the middle of the 19th century as too many women willing to do the work drove down piece rates. In other cases, families resorted to sending their daughters to textile factories in other towns. This type of wage work, “drew a sharp line between affluent women, who could afford to practice households arts without pay until marriage, and women, married or single, who needed to support themselves or help their families in the period of young adulthood before they set up their own families” (1982:30). As gender and class status performance expectations overlapped, many women found their economic realities and their social desires at odds. To satisfy this disconnect, some women took to lying about their status as wage laborers, at least through official channels. A review of census records in combination with oral histories indicate that women in both Pardeesville and Eckley who are said to have been wage workers by their family members reported themselves as not working or ‘keeping house’ to federal census takers. Other women in the anthracite region routinely engaged in economic activities that lay outside of official channels, such as home production of food or services for bartering, scavenging for coal and building materials, foraging for berries, and seasonal farm labor (PS, interview, 2014; GD, interview, 2014; PF, interview, 2014).

Families themselves also took on new forms. The increased availability of reliable contraceptives and abortifacients in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century meant American families decreased in size. Increased school attendance required greater family

investment in child rearing with fewer economic benefits, thereby creating negative incentives for the large families that had characterized the pre-industrial period. This shift was striking: in 1800, the average woman in the United States gave birth to seven children; by 1930, that average had shrunk to just over two children (Thornton 1985:384). Additionally, the rise of industrialization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to urbanization, and as children began to live away from home in order to work in factories, the rate of boarders – and of families taking in boarders as an economic activity – increased. However, as urbanization settled in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the phenomenon of boarding workers largely disappeared, and young people began to move out on their own in greater numbers. Although this particular family change wouldn't be cemented until the 1980s, the dissolution of the family as a cohesive economic unit meant that young people were increasingly able to move out on their own and away from parental supervision, which in turn drove other social changes (Thornton 1985).

Pennsylvania's anthracite company towns find themselves in a unique blend of old and new family production patterns. As many residents were migrants from rural Europe, such as Victoria Y. who will be discussed more in the next section, they created hybridized home economies that satisfied their economic circumstances with their ethnic backgrounds and the American middle class expectations that society forced on them. Fathers worked outside the home while mothers engaged in a variety of productive endeavors. Children went to school, although often older children left after receiving a basic education to enter the workforce and support the family. Girls' responsibilities largely mirrored their mothers, with teenaged women expected to work outside the home *and* help raise their younger siblings. Families continued to pool economic resources

through the 1930s and 1940s as an economic strategy for survival. This chapter explores some of the other responsibilities that women in these homes had as they sought to secure the social, ethnic, and economic futures for themselves and their children.

Archaeology and the material record have the opportunity in this instance to provide insight into everyday performances by revealing the types of activities taking place within a given location. By evaluating the material culture utilized in and produced by different types of acts, archaeologists can trace what acts were being undertaken within a household and assess the degree of gender stereotype conformity or subversion based on historical socialized gendered expectations.

### *Mothers*

At age 14, Victoria Cammarano boarded a ship in her native Italy bound for America. While it is unclear how much Victoria knew about what lay ahead, the facts are undisputed: she was being sent at the request of Rafaell Y. (Ralph) as part of an arranged marriage following the death of his first wife. After arriving in New York and travelling to Northeastern Pennsylvania, Victoria would have met her new husband (likely for the first time) as well as his (and now her) two daughters, aged 10 and 12. Practically overnight, Victoria had gone from being barely a young woman to suddenly being a wife and mother with a household to run (PD, interview, 5 July 2018) . While dramatic, Victoria's story is hardly unique for many women in anthracite company towns who found new (gendered) roles, responsibilities, and social expectations thrust upon them regularly. I will discuss how motherhood acted as a form of societally-dictated gendered role that women were expected to perform through a variety of means, including the

purchase of toys for their children and medical paraphernalia to regulate their roles as mothers.

As evidenced by the words sprawled on the Mothers Monument in Ashland, motherhood was not only a well-respected position within the anthracite region, but was often one of the few ‘acceptable’ positions for women to fill in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century American society writ large. As immigrants, women like Victoria existed in a liminal space: not quite ‘white’ by dominant American social standards, yet still seen as second class people existing somewhere between the categories of white and black. While their skin was light enough to see them classified as ‘free white persons’ upon entering the country, the racial demography of Northeastern Pennsylvania in the 19<sup>th</sup> century combined with popular attitudes towards Italians blocked their inclusion in the white working class. Because people of color had a relatively small historical presence in the anthracite region, Italians, Eastern Europeans, Celts, and other “probationary white races” were unable to leverage relative-whiteness to ‘whiten’ themselves through the presence of nonwhite Others (Jacobson 1998:57). Simultaneously, immigrants were culturally associated nationwide with accepting economic niches that had been marked as ‘black’. Failing to *act* white by engaging in employment (such as farm and manual labor) largely associated with black populations, by voting overwhelmingly for Republican and Populist candidates (similarly to black and in direct opposition to white supremacy candidates), and by inter-marrying with the local black population in some areas of the United States, immigrant groups began to be more closely associated with the black race than with the white race (Jacobson 1998:57-58). This cultural position had tangible consequences for the treatment of migrants in America: newspapers, magazines, and

politicians fed on concepts of innate criminality and slovenliness, ‘useless’ vs ‘desirable’ races, and “savage” people. Escaping this racial limbo took time; for example, Italians would remain in a racial, non-white middle ground through the 1920s.

Racism wasn’t just reserved for labor. The white genteel ideology of motherhood required a duality against which to judge itself, and African-American women were chosen as their foil. African-American women in the United States were stereotyped as being promiscuous and associated with “public women” (prostitutes) because of their higher rates of wage labor and, therefore, of being in public without male guardians (Spencer-Wood 2006:78). White women were then able to identify African-American mothers as Jezebels (harkening back to the religious roots of the Cult of Domesticity) because the African-American mothers’ economic situation prevented them from performing the gender- and class-based performances of purity and morality that demanded that mothers remain in the home with the children (Wilkie 2003). When immigrant women came to the United States and began the process of establishing their identities in America, white society would have made it abundantly clear that being associated with African-Americans was a negative connotation – and heightened the stakes for women as they reckoned their place within the country’s racial and ethnic hierarchy with their small household incomes.

This racial category ambiguity meant that mothering by women migrants in the Pennsylvania anthracite region was profoundly different from that of white native-born women elsewhere in the state and in the country. Collins (2010:371) notes that “motherhood occurs in specific historical contexts framed by interlocking structures of race, class, and gender... racial domination and economic exploitation profoundly shape



the mothering context not only for racial ethnic women in the United States but for all women.” However, feminist theorizing frequently downplays or ignores the intersections that other forms of identity have on women’s experiences. For the immigrant women in the anthracite region, the experience of mothering as a woman was inextricably linked to the experience of mothering as an immigrant and the experience of mothering as a member of the working community. The economic and social realities of each of these different types of identities had real consequences for the ways women conceived of and performed their roles as mothers. Immigrant women, in particular, were attacked by anti-immigrant

Society’s emphasis on women’s duties as mothers in America expanded dramatically following the American Revolution. The rise of the Cult of Domesticity in the early 1800s, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, brought with it a new definition of motherhood that Linda Kerber has referred to as Republican Motherhood. “The Republican Mother’s life was,” writes Kerber, “dedicated to the service of civic virtue; she educated her sons for it; she condemned and corrected her husband’s lapses from it... her domestic behavior had a direct political function in the republic” (1976:202). The invention of the republican mother stemmed from concerns about the American experiment’s fragility and a widely held belief that a virtuous citizenry was the only thing that could save the country; from this perspective arose the idea the future of America laid squarely with its youngest citizens, with the fate of the country resting squarely on the question of whether they were raised to be virtuous enough (Nash 1997, Norton 1980; see also Welter 1966). If virtue needed to be instilled from a young age, then, it follows that mothers and mothering are the single most important social

demographic and role in achieving this standard; following this concept, a plethora of fiction and non-fiction literature was written and re-published throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century aimed at inculcating these specific values and duties in popular conceptions of American womanhood and motherhood (Robbins 2002, Fliegelman 1982; see Child 1831, 1832, 1833, Sigourney 1833, Sedgwick 1836, 1841). Culturally, the ideal definition of motherhood in the 19<sup>th</sup> century blurred identities related to femininity, whiteness, American patriotism, and middle class status.<sup>23</sup> While the Cult of Domesticity emphasized women's roles as the religious figureheads of their families and women's responsibility to ensure their family's piety, the concept of Republican Motherhood took women's duties a step further by connecting this religious imperative to mothering to other aspects of identity, specifically class and ethnic situations.

Aside from the ethnic and religious connotations of being a mother, class identity also played a role in shaping societal expectations of mothers. Social reformers throughout the Progressive Era expounded on the failings of working class families to provide proper environments and educations for their children, leading to thousands of "children of poverty and vice" (Brace 1872:27). Social reformers warned middle and upper class citizens that these working class children "might leave this city in ashes and blood" if the "Law lift[ed] its hand from them for a season, or let the civilizing influences of American life fail to reach them" (Brace 1872:29). The fault for this moral failing was not placed with industrialists who used exploitative labor practices and low wages to press into service every able-bodied member of a family, but with the working class

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<sup>23</sup> These definitions of motherhood relied heavily on white middle class standards, especially those in which women were able to attain some level of education which could then be used to educate her sons to pursue social and political capital (Kerber 1976; see Beecher 1841)

parents themselves. Reformers fought against the perceived “degenerate influence lower class and immigrant parents exerted over their offspring” by establishing aid societies and settlement houses to train working class adolescents in middle class culture (Gish 1994, quoting Charles Loring Brace, p. 3; Cohen 1980). This type of social pressure would have been a factor that encouraged women to adopt middle class parenting strategies, although the material record will provide a better indication of whether women in the anthracite region did or did not bow to this pressure.

Women in America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who had connections to broader trends in society would have been aware of the socially-expected gender performances and been under pressure to submit to them, including women in the geographically-isolated but culturally-connected regions of anthracite-rich Appalachia. These types of socially determined responsibilities align with the concept of gendered performances discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Performing ‘proper’ motherhood (as defined by the Cult of Domesticity and Republican Motherhood models) strengthened individuals’ claims to identities as women. In this way, the decision to obey the regulations associated with proper motherhood had bearing on whether a woman would even be considered a woman by her society. Therefore, the stakes for women’s performances of the gendered role of ‘mother’ were high, with real consequences for failing to embody society’s norms.

The material culture recovered from the houses in Pardeesville and Eckley, as supplemented by oral histories from the region, indicate that women’s performance and negotiation of their identities as mothers were both complicated and fraught. The ideal performance of middle class motherhood (and, therefore, femininity) saw women raise children who were prepared for the social roles they would fill as adults: sons would be

raised to acquire and accumulate economic, social, and political capital and become future leaders, while daughters were raised to effectively and efficiently manage households for those men (Kerber 1976). Working class women, on the other hand, were still held to these same mothering-as-patriotism standards, although communication of these standards was often more diffuse. Working class children were not expected to gain cultural capital or become civic leaders, but rather to reproduce their parents' social station within society while constituting members of a morally upright and responsible citizenry (Robbins 2002; Cruce 2005). Working class women would have been aware of the social expectations of their positions while simultaneously being frustratingly unable to fulfill many of the facets of those expectations, such as the ability to not work. Here we see how intersectional identities impacted women's abilities to fulfill gender roles.

*Material Culture from Anthracite Company Towns.*

Despite the various forms of economic deprivation and social discrimination that many migrant mothers experienced as members of an ethnic working class demographic, the archaeological findings indicate that women in anthracite company towns were both obeying the requirements set out by Republican Motherhood while also demonstrating personal agency in their status as 'mothers'. I will now outline material culture related to the gendered performance of 'mother' and illuminate the ways that material culture can provide insights to larger social trends in gender performance and individual agency.

Archaeological understandings of the gendered aspects of material culture have shifted dramatically since the arrival of third wave feminism. Conkey and Spector's (1984) article on gender in archaeology highlighted the role that archaeology had played

in reifying and cementing modern gender conventions. The authors encouraged archaeologists to challenge the androcentric bias inherent throughout anthropology as a whole as well as “the imposition of ethnocentric assumption about the nature, roles, and social significance of males and females derived from our own culture on the analysis of other groups” (1984:4). Previously, culturally-based gender stereotypes were used unquestioningly in analyses, including portrayals of men as “stronger, more aggressive, dominant, more active, and in general more important than females. Females, in contrast, are presented as weak, passive, and dependent” (1984:4). Classic archaeological gender paradigms such as Man the Hunter (e.g. Washburn and Lancaster 1968, Laughlin 1968) and the projectile points=men/pots=women dichotomy (e.g. Winters 1968) that relied on presumptions of rigid and static sexual divisions of labor became increasingly outmoded and culturally unacceptable within the discipline in the 1980s and 1990s as greater attention was paid to gender as a category of analysis and the lack of robustness of those frameworks became apparent. These perceived equity issues led, at least in part, to an explosion in interest in research focused explicitly on gender in the past (Conkey and Gero 1997; see Smith and du Cros 1995, Wylie 1994). The rise of Third Wave feminism led feminist archaeologists to increasingly seek intersectional identity perspectives in their work (Geller 2009), to confront the underlying forms of power related to control over objects and interpretation stemming from archaeology’s colonialist origins (Nicholas and Bannister 2004; Conkey 2005), and focus on the creation of masculinity (see Joyce 2001). This dissertation focuses on elucidating intersecting identities within the archaeological record by examining the multiplicity of meanings within different forms of material culture; however, addressing the other two mainstays of Third Wave

feminist archaeological practice (confronting forms of colonial power and exploring the creation of masculinity) is beyond the scope of this work and will not be attempted here.

### *Toys.*

Although the very nature of toys and child's play make toys likely additions to the archaeological record, historical archaeologists have been slow to acknowledge the presence and role of children in the past (Wilkie 2005). Wilkie chides historic archaeologists for focusing on parents' attempts to instill values in their children rather than on children's own reactions to material culture as well as for underestimating the economic and social roles of children in past societies (2005:100). While Wilkie's critique of historical archaeologists is justified, I suggest that toys can serve both functions and that the decision making process behind choosing toys for children (regardless of whether children engaged with those toys) can provide important insights for parenting methods and ideologies in the past. Although the primary user of children's toys were children, the toys themselves were generally acquired by parents for their children's use. Because the intentionality of the purchase lays with the purchaser, rather than the user, we can read the deeper messages promoted through consumptive choices.<sup>24</sup>

Toys are more than playthings (Sillar 1994, Wilkie 2005, Yamin 2002). They, as well as children-specific artifacts such as those related to education, "represent attempts, made by adults, to suggest and enforce certain norms of behavior for children based upon

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<sup>24</sup> I focus here on adults' intentions with regards to children's toys rather than children's intentions with regards to children's toys because the focus of this chapter is on adult women, not their children. For a deeper discussion on children's relationships to children's toys and the reading of agency, social dialogs, and consumptive choices by children, see Wilkie 2005.

their gender, age, socio-economic class and even socio-cultural ideals of beauty” (Wilkie 2005:101). Yamin highlights the class differences in toy-buying experiences, noting that studies of toys within historical archaeology have largely focused on middle class or elite contexts but that “the values embedded in their [working class families’] choices are different than middle-class values and certainly different than the values attributed to the working class by 19th century bourgeois reformers” (2002:114). Although children had been increasingly encouraged to play with toys beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the meanings and social value of childhood, and by extension toys, fundamentally shifted during the first half of the 19th century (Feister 1991). Following the rise of the Cult of Domesticity, greater emphasis was placed on childhood as a period in which children required physical and emotional nurturing in the home supplied by their mothers (Wall 1994). Children’s time at home was intended to prepare them for the social and gender roles they would be expected to fulfill as adults. As industrialization promoted more rigid sexual divisions of labor, these divergent roles were similarly reflected in toys and the forms of play that were encouraged (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992). It follows, then, that the toys parents supplied to their children would reflect miniature versions of the props that would come to define their children’s future gender and class roles.

Toy artifacts recovered from contexts in Eckley and Pardeesville capture a vision of childhood that is both gendered and gender neutral. Toys such as miniature porcelain tea sets and porcelain dolls were meant to train young girls for roles that would be expected of them later in life, namely hosting social gatherings and caring for children, while toys such as marbles were generally associated with boys and toys such as jacks were associated with both genders. However, as the types and numbers of artifacts

recovered will show, the toys children played with in the anthracite region were also dictated by class standing.

### Tea Sets.

Tea sets are among the most ubiquitous forms of children's toys recovered from 19th and early 20th century archaeological contexts. Tea sets, like porcelain dolls which will be discussed next, as well as other girl's toys "tended to be small, fragile objects... [that] required quiet, careful handling and often encouraged solitary play indoors" (Calvert 1992:112). Tea sets were a particularly important class and gendered form of toy because they served the dual function of teaching children table manners and proper middle class social etiquette (Feister 1991). Some have suggested that these types of findings suggest dreams of up upward mobility by working class families (see Yamin 2002) while others have suggested that such toys can instead reflect children's own attempts at gathering social capital through high status toys (see Wilkie 2005). Regardless of the individual rationales of the purchasers, the basic fact of the toys' presence certifies that "adults were promoting certain cultural agendas to their children through the purchase and production of certain toys" (Wilkie 2005:102).

Miniature tea sets were recovered from 34, 36, and 38 Back Street as well as from 217 Lower Street (Figure 21). Counts for these artifacts are available in Table 2.

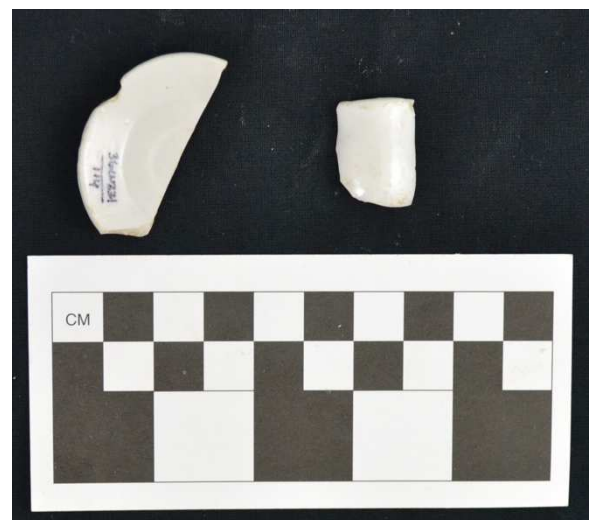


Figure 21. Fragments of toy porcelain tea set, including saucer and cup.



The 217 Lower Street assemblage had the largest number of tea set sherds, with these sherds representing at least two separate decorative motifs, which could indicate two separate tea sets. These were molded and undecorated decorative types. The 38 Back Street toy tea set sherds featured heavily decorated motifs with hand painted and gilded decorations.

Table 2. Toys Recovered by House

	34 Back St	36 Back St	38 Back St	40 Back St	217 Lower St
Doll fragments	3	1	7	4	1
Marbles	2	11	20	8	3
Toy tea set fragments	1	1	5		7
Slate pencil	5	6	5	3	3
Slate writing board	1				
Hard rubber ball		1			1
Lead animal figurine		1 (horse)	1 (rooster)		
Plastic wheel				1	
Plastic shovel			1		
Celluloid pinback button				1	
Toy Grecian vase				1	

The presence of these toys in the working class contexts in Eckley and Pardeesville indicate the complicated relationship of working class families to middle class cultural ideals. Although the toy tea sets were originally intended to convey middle and upper class social training to young girls, the working classes' adoption of this type of material culture indicates mothers' desires for their children's upward social mobility. However, the miner's house assemblage of toy tea sets indicates a different level of dedication to conveying this idea. The artifacts recovered indicate that the family living in the miner's house owned multiple sets of toy tea sets, including with different decorative motifs, while the houses on Back Street in Eckley only show evidence of one

set or, in the case of 40 Back Street, no toy tea sets. This could be indicative of the miner's house family being more invested in training their daughters in proper middle class etiquette, and thereby indicating another difference in material consumption based on class aspirations in coal company towns.

#### Dolls.

Dolls served as a perfect tool for teaching middle class gender ideologies to young girls. Dolls portrayed both adult women and children with each form having different teaching goals. Dolls portraying adults were initially marketed to wealthy families as a way to “instill a sense of style, fashion, and etiquette” amongst their daughters (Wilkie 2005:102; Pritchett and Pastron 1980; Goodfellow 1993). Meanwhile, dolls portraying children sought to teach young girls mothering and childrearing skills. Playing with dolls also encouraged girls' sewing skills as girls often needed to sew their own clothes for their dolls – another skill that would be necessary for the girls' future gender roles as wives and mothers. Purchasing dolls for their daughters, then, would have been mothers' way of preparing their daughters for future responsibilities they would have within the typical gendered roles for women. In this way, dolls helped to socialize children into their culturally-dictated gender roles and normalize these forms of sexual division of labor.

Doll fragments were recovered from all five houses included in this study (see Table 2). Three porcelain doll sherds were recovered from 34 Back Street, one porcelain doll fragment was recovered from 36 Back Street, seven porcelain doll sherds were recovered from 38 Back Street (although several of these mend), and two porcelain and

two plastic doll fragments were recovered from 40 Back Street (Figures 22 and 23). Additionally, one porcelain doll fragment was recovered from 217 Back Street.

The widespread presence of dolls across the households indicates that dolls were likely a typical toy within anthracite households more generally. However, the presence of the plastic doll fragments from 40 Back Street indicates variation within the patterns of consumption exploited by different households.



Figure 22. Porcelain doll arm.



Figure 23. Porcelain doll face.

Marbles.

Rebecca Yamin's work in Five Points, New York, and Paterson, New Jersey, reveals that marbles were the most common type of toy artifact in these working class neighborhoods. Marbles were used to play a variety of games, although all of these games were predominantly played by boys outside (Yamin 2002).

A large number of marbles were recovered from the excavations at the five houses (Figure 24). Two earthenware marbles were recovered from 34 Back Street, nine earthenware and two porcelain marbles were recovered from 36 Back Street, 20 earthenware marbles were recovered from 38 Back Street, seven earthenware and one glass



Figure 24. A selection of the marbles recovered from Eckley.

marble were recovered from 40 Back Street, and three earthenware and one glass marble were recovered from 217 Lower Street.

The least expensive marbles were made from ceramic, and these types of marbles typify the types of marbles generally recovered from historic sites with as much as 80 to 95 percent of marbles recovered from most sites consisting of ceramic types (Carskadden and Gartley 1990:55). More expensive and less common types of marbles include stone and glass varieties. Even after the introduction of American machine-made glass marbles in 1902, which created a cheaper alternative to German hand-made glass marbles, ceramic marbles of all paste types continued to be the cheapest market option. Within the different types of ceramic marbles, however, porcelain marbles were the most expensive.

Marbles followed the same patterns of material culture hierarchy and social desirability that other consumer goods do, with different types of marbles being indicative of different social statuses. Archaeological excavations have confirmed that more expensive marble types appear in certain neighborhoods earlier and in greater

quantities than others (Gartley and Carskadden 1998). Although children were also known to trade marbles (Randall 1979), others maintained material culture class boundaries by only playing with people who had glass marbles – the most expensive kind in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Zwaagdijk 1935). Looking at the assemblages from Eckley and Pardeesville, we see then that although houses such as 38 Back Street have an abundance of marbles, the fact that they are all unglazed earthenware indicates that this high number of toys is not necessarily an indicator of economic success. Likewise, although both 217 Lower Street and 40 Back Street have relatively small numbers of marbles when compared to 38 Back Street, the fact that each house has one glass marble shows that they were spending more money on the marbles that they did purchase. The family at 36 Back Street also invested more in their marble toys than the family at 38 Back Street, although the 36 Back Street porcelain marbles would still have cost less and likely been less desirable when compared to the glass marbles at 217 and 40. Finally, the combination of a small number of marbles with the fact that the few marbles recovered were both unglazed earthenware connotes 34 Back Street as either unaware, unable, or uninterested in participating in the consumption of high status marbles. As parents were likely the ones making the majority of the marble purchases, it is then unsurprising to see that 36 Back Street, which had an abundance of forms of fake status items, would also be choosing to purchase toys for their children that implied economic and social uplift.

#### Slate Pencils and Writing Boards.

The separation of the family from the traditional, pre-industrial unit of production into several disparate pieces opened individuals to seek their own opportunities with their own

goals. With this in mind, mothers began to instill in their children a devotion to individualism and focus on transferring education to the future generations as a means to secure power and wealth rather than land. This trend first arose amongst the highest classes in the mid-19th century, but the importance of individual ability and skill was gradually permeating the ideologies of the middle and working classes by the end of the 19th and into the early 20th centuries (Hawes and Nybakken 2001: 6-7).

While not technically a toy, slate pencils and slate writing boards provide another form of evidence that serves to suggest mothers' social intentions for their children. Even historically, education "has been viewed as a major liberation tool for the acquisition of racial, gender and class equality" (Johnson 2000:xxi). However, education also serves as a method for enculturation (Helton 2010). Middle and upper class social reformers in the 19th century began heavily pushing for universal education of the citizenry (defined primarily as white males, although this was expanded in some non-slave areas to include non-white children as well) in order to ensure the cultivation of future generations of morally upright individuals who had been thoroughly schooled in the doctrines of Protestant Christianity (Connor 1997). These reformers sought this change not only for the social uplift of the working classes, but also as protection for themselves against the possibility of an electoral majority that did not hold their same social values (Helton 2010:113). Establishing a national system of education could guarantee that future generations of Americans would hold uniform, socially-dictated opinions on a variety of topics. It could also act as a way to inculcate nationalism and American identity. With this perspective in mind, the slate pencils and writing boards at Eckley and Pardeesville could represent either of two opposite possibilities: that mothers encouraged their

children to practice their schoolwork in the home outside of school hours as part of their dedication to social uplift and cultural assimilation into American society, or that mothers were attempting to provide their children with an alternative form of education in the home separate from the lessons imparted to children during their formal schooling. In either case, learning and education are held as pathways to other opportunities. Slate pencils were recovered from every house in Pardeesville and Eckley (Figure 25), with 34 Back Street also having a fragment of a lined slate writing board identified as well.



Figure 25. Assortment of slate pencils.

#### Miscellaneous Toys.

A variety of other toys were also recovered from these household contexts, although singularly or in small numbers. I will now discuss some of those unique finds and what they indicate about parenting strategies in the anthracite region.

The presence of lead figurines in the shape of farm animals from houses 36 and 38 Back Street, as well as the recovery of a small toy shovel from 38 Back Street, provide further evidence of children being indoctrinated by their parents into the social roles and



Figure 27. Lead farm animal figurines.



Figure 26. Zinc alloy toy shovel missing handle.

responsibilities that they would be expected to undertake as adults (Figures 26 and 27).

Although it is impossible to know which gender the children who owned the farm animal figurines were, both men and women in company towns would have had to have been familiar with livestock to successfully manage a household so it is entirely possible that the figurines were intended for either or both genders of children. However, the lessons behind this toy – how to care for livestock – is also a uniquely working class responsibility, as middle and upper class families wouldn't have needed training in how to raise their own farm animals. Even if the intentionality behind the toys isn't directly related to the act of caring for and raising livestock, the association with livestock is still closer to a working class subsistence identity than it is to a contemporary middle class one. Therefore, although most of the houses in Eckley and Pardeesville partook in consumption strategies for children's toys that emphasized middle class gender roles (specifically the toy tea sets), at least two houses balanced this by also providing toys that are more associated with a working class lifestyle that is closer to the land and farther away from genteel society.



The presence of a celluloid pinback button is a testament to the adoption of new technologies even in remote areas of the country (Figure 28). Although celluloid was cheap, it had a relatively limited period of market success before being replaced by more



Figure 28. Celluloid pinback button.

versatile forms of plastic. The presence of the celluloid pinback button indicates that these company towns were engaging in the same consumption trends as were fashionable in the rest of the country, as is shown by the presence of material goods that were manufactured for only a few decades.

### Toy Discussion

The high prevalence of cheap toys (especially marbles) from the mine laborers' houses on Back Street in Eckley when compared to the miner's house in Pardeesville coupled with the high number of toy tea set sherds at the miner's house relative to the Back Street houses indicates that mother(s) in the miner's house were potentially intentionally purchasing toys that fostered a middle class social identity amongst their daughters. The presence of slate pencils from all households further illustrates the education was still important for families, even during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when child labor rates were high in the anthracite region. Although census records indicate that children were being sent to work, the presence of the slate pencils and slate writing boards is proof that education was taking place at home, whether as part of a school curriculum or after work. Education was frequently cited as vital to social uplift, so the presence of these

artifacts in these working class contexts could provide another line of evidence that working class anthracite mothers were investing in bettering the social and economic prospects of their children as part of their performance of being a proper mother.

We also see through the analysis of marble material types that some households were extending their consumptive preferences for fake high status items to their purchasing decisions on children's toys. The porcelain marble would have been more expensive and visibly different from their earthenware counterparts, but still would have been cheaper than glass marbles. Similarly, the presence of the glass marble in the small assemblage of marbles recovered from 217 Lower Street is in line with the patterns of consumption seen in other forms of material culture that value higher status items.

### *Medicalization of Motherhood as Gender Performance*

Another aspect of women's roles as mothers that arose during the 19th century was the increasing medicalization of the identity. While mothering skills had traditionally been passed down from mother's own mothers and other female relatives and friends, the medicalization movement used scientific and medical knowledge to argue that such traditional or home-grown practices were dangerous for children and denoted bad mothers (Apple 2014). The rise of scientific motherhood effectively denigrated women's collective knowledges of and experiences with the perinatal and postnatal phases in favor of knowledges presented by scientifically educated men. This cycle of dismissal continued to escalate until, by the mid-20th century, women were thought to be incapable of raising children without scientific intervention across Western society.

The rise of scientific motherhood meant that women's performances of the role of 'mother' took on a new dimension. Not only were women now expected to seek out the most up-to-date and 'scientific' literature available, but they were constantly assailed by medical advice on mothering from doctors, child-care manuals, women's magazines, and home economics classes (Apple 1995:162). These sources conveyed the notion that "giving birth made a woman a mother in the physical, biological sense only; a good mother had to learn about mothering from authoritative sources," with women being threatened that the alternative for their children was death (1995:167). Although much of this advice focused directly on parenting methods, such as breastfeeding vs. bottle feeding infants or the proper method of bathing an infant, other, more bizarre aspects of the medicalization of motherhood used the same negative-appeal ad campaigns<sup>25</sup> and pleas from medical 'professionals' to sell everything from books to toilet paper.

Of course, women's ability to fulfill these social expectations for the proper way to embody scientific mothering also depended on aspects of identity other than just gender. The medicalization of motherhood effectively reproduced social stratifications in gender roles. Being able to abide by the rules of scientific mothering was seen by some communities as a way to leverage an 'American' identity, especially against immigrant mothers who had recently arrived in the United States and who received the brunt of social scorn for their mothering techniques (Litt 2000, see Roberts 1904). Intersectional associations of gender and ethnic identities also crossed over to racial and class identities, as well. Litt (2000) found that middle-class African American women also sought out medical services as part of their mothering practice because it not only symbolized

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<sup>25</sup> Negative-appeal ads rely on vague or ominous statements to imply that negative things will happen to a consumer if they do not purchase a product.

American motherhood, but also offered a method for social uplift and a way to fight racism. Meanwhile, structural issues facing working class mothers, such as trying to get time off from work, prevented them from engaging to the same extent with the medical establishment, which thereby hampered their ability to carry out the expected medicalized part of motherhood. In this way, the performance of motherhood according to popular American cultural definitions also had ethnic, racial, and class undertones and requirements.

These consumption choices as well as the act of seeking out information and acting on its advice constitute a performance of culturally-accepted motherhood. In some instances, these performances required the use of consumer goods that are left behind in the archaeological record. In the case of birth control, especially, consumer goods intended to facilitate the prevention of pregnancy “emphasized the naturalness of women’s twin roles as consumer and reproducers.” Drawing on this connection, companies “urged women to use their purchasing ‘power’ to assume full responsibility for pregnancy prevention” (Tone 2001:156). At both Eckley and Pardeesville, material culture related to the proper performance of an American version of motherhood – one in which medical interventions were used to regulate and manage one’s role as a woman – have been recovered, both of which relate to pregnancy planning and prevention. The presence of Lysol and condom tins in domestic contexts within coal company towns attests to women’s changing relationship with the Catholic church and American culture.

Lysol.

Along with the medicalization of motherhood came a medicalization of women's bodies. Parallel to the idea that women were unable to raise children without scientific guidance, the medical community (and ad agencies that took advantage of the cultural climate) increasingly pushed women to implement medical interventions in all areas pertaining to their health. This medical turn in society after the turn of the 20th century meant that doctors' (and the medical establishment's) powers over women increased to unprecedented levels (Tone 2001:138). One of the most infamous of these attempts to control women's bodies and sell more product under the guise of medical advice was Lehn and Fink Company's ad campaign for their cleaning product Lysol.

Introduced in the 1890s, Lysol began being aggressively advertised to woman as a feminine hygiene product in the early 1900s (Tone 2001:170). Although the 1873 Comstock Act had criminalized the use of the United States Postal Service to disperse information about a variety of topics deemed 'immoral', including contraceptives and abortifacients, companies were able to skirt the law by using euphemisms that were widely known to refer to contraception (Tone 2001; Ruppenthal 1919). Lysol was advertised as a douching solution intended to "insure feminine daintiness" (Lehn and Fink n.d.). As douching was the most popular form of birth control in the United States between 1940 and 1960, Lysol faced stiff competition. In order to give the disinfectant product an advantage, advertisements for the brand relied on an assortment of fear-inducing bylines focused on the topics of husband abandonment, social scorn, and disintegrating health. With statements such as, "Beware of the one intimate neglect that can engulf you in marital grief" (Lehn and Fink 1949), "Mrs. J--- is pretty, poised and

friendly. You'd think that both men and women would like to talk to her... But she's careless about 'the one unforgiveable fault,' So she's seldom invited back a second time" (1956), and "Seldom does she [the consumer] realize that this health-stealing F E A R is the direct outcome of either timid ignorance or gross neglect of proper marriage hygiene" (1933), women consumers were kowtowed into submission through a variety of multilayered threats. Because 'feminine hygiene' was a known euphemism for pregnancy and douching was not only touted as a form of cleanliness but also as a form of birth control, these Lysol ads only barely conceal their intended message: that without Lysol, women will have no control over their reproduction, leading to absent husbands and fathers as well as poor health outcomes for the woman herself. In an interesting twist, the Lysol ads indicate that the medicalization of motherhood in the 20th century was increasingly focused on *suppressing* motherhood – a fact supported by the United States' steadily declining birth rate after 1880 (Tone 2001:68).

Two broken Lysol bottles were recovered from the excavations at 40 Back Street (Figure 29). Although it is impossible to know exactly what purposes the Lysol was used for, the fact that Lysol was specifically marketed as an antiseptic douche, that antiseptic douche was listed as the first use on the package (for comparison, disinfecting household surfaces is listed seventh), and that other forms of disinfectants are also known to have been



Figure 29. Fragment of Lysol bottle recovered from Eckley.

available to families living in Eckley, it is entirely possible that this product represents a

woman's engagement with the social pronouncements of the time regarding women's duties to prevent pregnancy.<sup>26</sup>

### Condoms.

The other form of material culture related to pregnancy and motherhood recovered during the excavations were three condom tins recovered during the excavations at 217 Lower Street in Pardeesville (Figure 30).

The condom tins were of the 3 Merry Widows brand,



Figure 30. Three Merry Widows condom tins.

which sold cement rubber-type reusable condoms in the 1920s and 1930s before the introduction of latex condoms in the 1930s caused consumers to abandon the older cement rubber types (Anderson 2010). Historically, condoms' primary function was to prevent pregnancy, and so the conversations on acquiring and using condoms would have been a collaborative one between men and women, who both took risks. Before the federal regulation of the contraceptive industry and during the period in which the Comstock Act was still forcing contraceptive sales onto the black market, consumers had few ways of knowing whether contraband contraceptives were safe or effective. Men and women relied on advice from families and friends and shared their experiences; mothers talked to daughters about the best ways to avoid pregnancy; and everyone sought advice

<sup>26</sup> A broken Clorox bottle was recovered from a contemporaneous stratum at Eckley at 34 Back Street, indicating the availability of disinfectants that were also advertised as disinfectants.

from “experienced contraceptors” (Tone 2001:68). Women, who arguably had more at stake by getting pregnant, used multiple forms of contraceptives to increase their odds of success. Although it is impossible to know who purchased (and subsequently discarded) the condoms, their function as contraception connects directly to women’s roles in managing their status as women and controlling the number of children they had.

### *Mothers Conclusion*

A variety of forms of material culture reveal the nuances in experience of women’s roles as mothers in anthracite company towns. Toys served as more than playthings – they served as training materials for the lives that mothers aspired or imagined their children leading. While mothers purchased materials for the betterment of their children and to prepare them for the economic and gendered responsibilities they would have as adults, mothers were also under pressure to manage their own status as mothers within the paradigm of medicalized motherhood. The presence of these artifacts is a testament to the connectedness of anthracite communities and anthracite women to larger American cultural trends and their willingness to engage with these concepts, even though many of these women had in fact been born abroad. Although these items express a version of an identity that was unique to each individual, these items also show how women were responding to the consumption pressures of popular gender, class, and ethnic ideologies. Women’s roles as mothers, though, are just one of many, many social roles that women were expected to fulfill; the rest of this chapter will explore other, not-so-obvious positions that women in the anthracite region adopted and embodied as part of their identity as women.



### Ministers

Victoria Y. made it her personal mission to ensure that her children and grandchildren went above and beyond in their religious devotions. Speaking 45 years after Victoria's death, her grandchildren still remembered Victoria's Lenten tradition:

PD: I went to turn the radio on during Lent and I thought grandmom was about to chop my fingers off. We couldn't watch TV or listen to the radio during Lent or else.

DD: When was the [sign up hour]? That one time when you have to go to church and be silent during that hour?

PD: Good Friday and Maundy Thursday.

DD: We'd have to go visit seven churches, if you knew how to drive. If you didn't, you had to go in and out the church seven times. On your knees.

AD: Kissing the cross and all that jazz.

PD: Cause after [my sister] was gone, grandmom would say, cause I couldn't drive, "Come on, we're walking up to church and we're staying for seven times." I'm like, ugh. From Thursday on, just bring your lunch.

(PD, DD, AD, interview, 5 July 2018)

While Victoria was undeniably devoted to her Catholic faith, her self-appointed role as religious enforcer for her family and extended family was actually part of a larger culturally-dictated gender role that was particularly strong within ethnic communities.

This section will explore the religious imperative placed on women as part of the Cult of Domesticity as well as the unique situation for immigrant women in the intersections of women's roles as culture bearers and the church's role as a cultural institution. I'll discuss the social linkages between feminine gender performance and religiosity of the family and demonstrate how women in anthracite company towns served as informal religious ministers to their families as evidenced by oral histories and archaeological findings including saint medals, prayer medals, rosaries, porcelain religious wall decorations, and religious art.

The Cult of Domesticity helped to solidify the relationship between femininity and religiosity. Barbara Welter observes that, “religion or piety was the core of woman’s virtue, the source of her strength” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1966:152).<sup>27</sup> Writers, both men and women, from throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century agreed that women were naturally more drawn to religion and religious teachings than men (see Bailey 1831, Osgood 1842, Anonymous 1849). Women were said to be naturally religious because “hers is a pious mind. Her confiding nature leads her more readily than men to accept the proffered grace of the Gospel” (Welter 1966:153 quoting Charles Meigs 1847). With the centrality of religion to women’s general character well established as a fact of 19<sup>th</sup> century American society, women sought to fulfill those expectations. Religion was believed to be well-suited for women in part because it allowed women to remain in the home and did not threaten to make her less domestic or submissive (1966:153). Religion was seen as an acceptable use of women’s time and energy in keeping with the values of the Cult of Domesticity – piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Middle and upper class women who were afforded this avenue of study took up the mantle with enthusiasm, using religion as the justification for establishing ladies’ societies as well as relief and reform groups for the poor (Bowman 2017). Eventually, women’s deep connections to religion would evolve into the driving motivation behind the Progressive Era and the social reforms wealthy women sought to instill over and on behalf of working class populations (Dye 1991).

While middle class social expectations drew the connection between women and religiosity for the majority of Americans, immigrant women had a different experience. Women have long served as symbols of the nation, with various iconographies depicting

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<sup>27</sup> Welter’s article refers to the Cult of True Womanhood, although other scholars have noted that the two concepts are mostly interchangeable (see Fehlbaum 2016, Connellan 2016)

women as ‘founding mothers’ or “markers of cultural and national cohesion, most conspicuously during times of crisis” (Winter 2016:2; see Winter 2009). Although these depictions appear powerful or liberating, they instead often reinforce pre-existing gender roles and help to maintain the status quo, thereby serving as a justification of the existing social structure rather than a break from it (Honey 1984, Rupp 1978). However, in transnational migration contexts, these symbols of culture lent women a status as culture-bearers. More so than men, women have traditionally had the burden of identity politics “rested heavily on [their] shoulders... [they] are expected to dress and behave in culturally appropriate ways, even when these cultural ‘traditions’ are often invented of important from elsewhere” (Winter 2016:3). Others have suggested that women readily took up this role as guardians of cultural heritage as a form of gendered resistance to perceived male cultural supremacy (Christ 1998). Regardless of the motivations, women’s long association with being the bearers of culture had special implications for their roles as spiritual leaders within the domestic sphere.

Women’s gendered roles as both guardians of their family’s religiosity and bearers of their culture was perfectly married in the form of the ethnic church. Scholars have noted that “religion and ethnicity are closely related phenomena in North America” (Mullins 1987:321; Herberg 1960). Religion served and continues to serve as a conservative institution in many contexts where it maintains communities’ ethnic customs, languages, and promotes group solidarity (Mullins 1987:322). Churches have repeatedly been identified as migrants’ strongest ethnic institution (see Millett 1975, Mol 1976). Because women tasked with preserving their cultural traditions and passing them

on to future generations, the connection between immigrant women and ethnic churches is a natural one.

Indeed, women's sense of duty and their performance of religiosity in anthracite company towns was a recurring theme in oral histories conducted in former company towns. The anthracite region had a prolific number of ethnic churches representing the variety of ethnic backgrounds that had migrated to the region. Although the vast majority of the working classes were Catholic, churches representing various different types of Catholic congregations were organized across the region.<sup>28</sup> These religious convictions, however, also served as a form of self-alienation from the dominant Anglo-Protestant culture. Welsh migration was eased through their adherence to strict forms of Protestantism, which helped to shield them from nationalist vitriol that sought to (and succeeded in) synonymizing Protestantism with Americanism; the same form of identity that protected Welsh, though, made many Irish, Eastern, and Southern European immigrants the targets of xenophobia and anti-immigrant movements (Lewis 2011:44). In identifying Catholics, in particular, as cultural outsiders, people in power were able to justify their mistreatment of working class groups.

Family stories are dotted with instances where women took it upon themselves to perform their religious dedications and ensure those in their family (as well as those in the town at large) were also pious in their actions. Mrs. Clatch, a lifelong resident of Pardeesville, reportedly rang the Saint Nazarius church bells by hand at 6 AM, noon, and 6 PM daily (PD, PD, interview 5 July 2018). Victoria Y.'s house was filled with prints of

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<sup>28</sup> Although no complete list of ethnic churches in the eastern middle field of the Pennsylvania anthracite region exists, oral histories specifically mention Slovak Roman Catholic, Slovak Byzantine Catholic, Irish, Tyrolean, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Italian, Polish, Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox congregations.

religious paintings (PD, PD, interview 5 July 2018). Every year on Easter Sunday, Ellie Surgent allowed the church bus driver to sleep at her and her husband's house between the 2 AM Resurrection Service and the 7:30 AM Catholic Mass since Pardeesville was the end of the route. Ella Falatko in Eckley foraged for mushrooms in the woods during the fall in order to dry them for a special ethnic Easter soup. During World War II, women in Lattimer Mines walked to the small town's church door daily to say the rosary in memory of their sons, brothers, and fathers serving overseas. Victoria Y.'s family recounted that she forced all of her sons and grandsons to serve at altar boys in Saint Nazarius' Catholic Church. Many women, including Grace de Lorenzo, built their own shrines to the Virgin Mary when they finally purchased their own homes. Ellie Surgent insisted on having her sickly baby baptized shortly after birth; when the child died during the post-baptismal feast in the family's home, she remarked simply that at least the child was with God. Women's roles in the church was one they held with the upmost sanctity and seriousness. A Catholic priest in the anthracite region and lifelong resident noted that "the men and the boyfolk in a family labored in the mines; the women labored at home and also in the church... Women preserved family life and preserved church life... The gals were responsible for getting everybody in the family into heaven" (AG, interview, 2014). The small parish churches that dotted the majority of company towns often served as the community's recreation and gathering place, with many organizing community activities such as picnics, fairs, and dances (AG, interview, 2014; see FT, 22 October 1894). The ethnic churches served as both secular and religious centers of life for company town residents, and women actively cultivated their gendered roles as spiritual

guiders of their families through their continued performance of church rituals and traditions.

### *Artifacts*

Material culture recovered during the archaeological excavations reflects this relationship between women, the home, and religion. Personal items, such as jewelry, rosaries, and saint medals, and religious-themed household decorations, such as holy water fonts and crucifix wall hangings, show how religiosity was encouraged by women through the domestic environment and performed through material culture (Table 3).

Table 3. Religious Artifacts by House

	34 Back St	36 Back St	38 Back St	40 Back St	217 Lower St
Holy Water Font					X
Rosary Beads		X			
Crucifix Wall Hanging			X		
Saint Medals					X
Dogma/Pope Medals					X
Cross Pendant			X		

The variability in rates of religious artifacts recovered from the different house sites could be a depositional bias. Because religious items are often considered (literally) sacred, they are less likely to be lost or discarded in the same ways that ordinary material objects are. However, the privy excavations at 217 Lower Street represent an opportunity for things to be dropped accidentally (as in the case of the saint medals, which were probably worn by people) or as a place to dispose of broken religious artifacts (as in the case of the holy water font). Therefore, the complete absence of identifiably religious

artifacts from 34 Back Street and 40 Back Street could easily be explained by this bias rather than serve as a reflection of the religiosity of the occupants.

### Religious Home Decorations

Religious home decorations will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8. However, I mention them here because of their role in women's performance of their gender.

Because women were socially expected to be the religious leaders of their households because of women's perceived natural propensity for religion, many women (in accordance with the teachings of the Cult of Domesticity) decorated their houses with religious iconography. The recovery of the holy water font and the porcelain crucifix from the worker housing contexts reveals that this standard extended beyond the reach of the middle classes, who were largely the target of the teachings of the Cult of Domesticity, and into the homes of working class families. By decorating their homes with religious images and symbolism, women would have been unintentionally performing a socially-dictated gender role, although their motivations for accepting the role were likely multifaceted.

### Personal Religious Artifacts

The presence of the personal religious artifacts attests to the individual performances of religiosity that many or all members of the home would have participated in. Although oral histories indicate that women were responsible for ensuring that all members of their families "made it into heaven," the individual religious artifacts cannot be summarily connected to women or acts done by a particular woman. The presence of these artifacts,

however, does attest to the fact that women were successful in getting their family members to carry the proper religious items.

Typical forms of personal religious artifacts, such as pieces of rosaries, were recovered during these excavations (Figure 31).

However, one interesting find from the excavations that directly connects women's gender roles to domesticity and religiosity was the recovered of an undated religious pendant (Figure 32) featuring Pope Pius IX on one side and the Virgin Mary on the other. The pendant



Figure 32. Rosary Beads.

referenced December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1854, which is the date that the centrality of women as their household's spiritual leaders was cemented with Pope Pius IX's addition of the

Immaculate Conception to official church dogma in his papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus*.

Although the Virgin Mary had long held immense sway within church doctrine, and the concept of the Immaculate Conception had been defined in late antiquity, Pope Pius still

chose to poll Catholic bishops before issuing the papal bull to determine broader sentiment on the issue and found that 90% agreed

with issuing the proclamation (Brophy 1954). The presence of this artifact in the archaeological record shows that someone in the household held in high esteem the

Virgin Mary, who has also been cited as a role model for pious women. Although we do not know who this pendant belonged to, the presence of a religious pendant that



Figure 31. Pope Pius IX Immaculate Conception Dogma Pendant.



expressed celebrates the recognition of the Holy Mother within the Catholic Church is an important parallel for recognizing the role of women as spiritual leader within their households.

### *The End of Ethnic Churches*

Eventually, the very forces that made ethnic churches so successful became their downfall. In the past as today, “ethnic churches are initially established to meet the needs of an immigrant generation” (Mullins 1987:323). The wide variety of ethnic origins of those living in Northeastern Pennsylvania’s coal mining communities caused an equally wide variety of ethnic churches to be founded to support these populations (Figure 33). Cultural and language differences as well as differences in religious practices meant that



Figure 33. Ethnic churches perpetuated ethnic traditions, such as patron saint parades. This image shows the parade for St. Nazarius in Pardeesville, 1930s.

migrants often could not all attend the same church, while more mainstream and native-born congregations were often discriminatory towards migrant populations and made them unwelcome in their churches. The individual ethnic churches, then, provided migrant groups with a place that preserved ethnic identity, promoted social integration, validated ethnic customs and values, and ascribed dignity to membership in a particular ethnic group (Anderson and Frideres 1981:41). This was possible by celebrating the differences between the mainstream culture and the ethnicities' particular practices. However, as these ethnic populations become integrated into the broader society over time, usually challenges related to decreasing congregation size arise. In instances where immigration from a region is not continuous, Mullins (1987) observes that generational changes mean that second and third generation migrants often do not retain their original ethnic dialect, which forces ethnic churches to either expand to include bilingual church services (which is a form of assimilation) or to risk alienating younger audiences. Churches' organization rigidity can further alienate younger demographics by attempting to hold on to Old World traditions (Starbuck 1965). Ethnic churches eventually face one of two outcomes: either they adapt to the demands of a new generation, thereby assimilating into mainstream American culture while losing the ethnic overtones that necessitated their establishment, or they refuse to assimilate and continue to serve a very limited community that, if new immigrants from that region do not arrive, will eventually die off and lead to the dissolution of the church.

In the anthracite region, many ethnic churches have been able to continue operation through a combination of both strategies. Bolstered by the strong ethnic identities that still permeate the local population generations after their ancestors first

arrived in the region, ethnic churches have been able to survive by merging with other churches of the same ethnic background. For instance, the Queen of Heaven Parish at Our Lady of Grace Church has largely subsumed the other Italian Catholic church parishes in the region, including Saint Nazarius' Catholic Church that once operated in Pardeesville. However, increasingly secularization of the Western world as a whole, especially amongst younger generations, has largely diminished women's modern gendered religious responsibilities.

#### *Ministers Conclusion*

Women performed a wide number of gendered roles within the home. Immigrant women's roles as religious leaders within the home worked concurrently with their roles as culture bearers for future generations. Oral histories and material culture evidence gathered from the anthracite region's coal company towns supports the assertion that women held special roles within the domestic spheres as the religious leaders of their households. The presence of religious artifacts indicates the physical performance of devotion and cycle of activities within and related to the church that women would have regularly engaged in. The performance of these activities would have solidified women's status as women and reiterated their femininity for the greater community, thereby shaping and reflecting their piety through consumption.

#### *Managers*

On a hot July afternoon, nine of Victoria's grandchildren and great grandchildren sat around a dining room table in Pardeesville looking over family photos.

Interviewer: “You all keep referring to [Victoria] as a ‘rough’ woman. Why is that? What made her ‘rough’?”

PD: “She was huge! She was really tall”

AD: \*in an incredulous tone\* “She was four foot eleven when she died!”

PD: “Well she was a big presence... She had her hatchet here [gesturing to her left hip] and all her other garden tools here [gesturing to her right hip].”

Interviewer: “So then was it really Victoria who really in charge?”

PD: “Yes”

Interviewer: “Ok, so it’s not Ralph who’s making—

AD: “You didn’t hear his name once yet, did ya?”

(PD and AD, interview, 5 July 2018)

What anthracite women lacked in stature they made up for in drive and command. These imposing figures had to be larger-than-life: they had a household to run, a family to manage, and the proverbial deck stacked against them. This section explores some of the responsibilities and roles women in the anthracite region like Victoria had to manage, and the approaches that they took to those tasks.

While women were encouraged to serve informally as spiritual leaders within their homes and were highly prized within society for their roles as mothers to the next generation of (male) American citizens (assuming that they mothered their children in the socially-prescribed manner), working class women’s most demanding and consuming role was their status as household managers. As the bridge between domestic life and factory life, women were responsible for ensuring the proper allocation of resources within the household and for making purchasing, career, and other important decisions. This section will explore some of the responsibilities that working class women in the anthracite region would have held in their execution of the gender performance of being a woman.

Lamphere (1987) carefully outlines working women’s simultaneous position in both the domestic and factory setting through her role as both productive and

reproductive labor. Although frequently separated in Marxist analyses, Lamphere shows how both kinds of labor are present in both the home and the factory settings. Labor is reproduced in the home, but the social relations of production and the means of productions (the machinery itself) that facilitate and enable the system of capitalist exploitation are reproduced at the factory. At the same time, production is done in the factory, but production also shapes the lives of workers and their families in the home, such as determining the allocation of children's labor (to the factory instead of to school or in the home) and reallocation of women's labor (such as to economic activities in the home or by dictating the hours during which sleeping, recreation, cleaning, parenting, and cooking can be done) through controlling schedules and wages (Lamphere 1987:17-19). Given this reality, the image of women, especially those in the working class, as having their identities centered within the confines of the home is misleading and obfuscates the universal presence of capitalist production in all aspects of laborers' lives.

Furthermore, women's identities within the home were imperative to the success of (and, at times, worker resistance to) corporate work flow. In the anthracite region, companies relied on women's reproductive and domestic labor to provide new workers and to house boarders, which saved the company money by removing the need to build more houses for workers (Lamphere 1987, Kleinberg 1973). Companies also often relied on kin networks for labor recruitment, which they could then use as leverage to threaten those who joined unions, threatened to strike, or otherwise engaged in behavior that the company disapproved of. Bosses and overseers could hold family members directly responsible for the actions of their relatives, thereby increasing the stakes for everyone involved to be productive and well-behaved in the workplace (Hareven 1978, Stepenoff

1999). Both the maintenance of familial ties and the provisioning of a home environment (even when paid for) are tasks generally associated with women's performance of a feminine gender role but which companies took advantage of for their own benefit.

In the anthracite region, women were largely responsible for creating stability within the inherently unstable mining industry. The cyclical nature of coal production (high production during the spring and summer while shipping lanes are still open in preparation for winter demand, and lower production during winter when it is harder to extract and move coal to selling locations) meant that families had little way of planning for the future economically (Congress 1889). Additionally, because coal miners' wages were tied to sale prices at port, it was impossible to know what a workers' wage would be on any given day, further exacerbating already precarious economic situations (Hugh McGarvey testimony to Congress 1889:38-39). It was women's responsibility to ensure the family survived in these unstable circumstances; however, women had relatively limited options for achieving this while still balancing society's expectations for 'proper' women. As household and familial managers, women turned to the options that they did have: by managing their domestic labor and finding opportunities for economic gain through that labor, by making decisions about sending children to work, and by being active participants in labor disputes carried out by the family members.

### *Labor at Home*

Donna Seifert (1991:82) said it best with her statement, "For working-class wives, the home was the workplace." At their heart, coal company towns were economic entities. Workers in the lowest paying positions and their families were frequently forced into

uneven economic situations that required supplemental income for basic survival.

Although children were often sent into wage labor positions when the situation became untenable, a much more common and less addressed way of making ends meet involved the domestic labor and invisible employment of adult women in the household. Domestic labor constitutes a variety of tasks that women undertook within the home. Many of these constitute intense forms of repetitive labor that were necessary for running the household, tasks such as fetching water, cleaning clothes, cleaning the house, cooking, and caring for children, and which took up tremendous amount of women's time and energy. The majority of mine houses lacked running water until the 1920s or 1930s, meaning women were responsible for hauling water to the house from communal waters pumps located in towns. For those who did have running water, the plumbing usually consisted of a single spigot from which water then had to be heated on the family's cook stove and hauled outside in warm months for bathing or laundry (Stepenoff 1999:48; AF, interview 2018). Laundering miner's "coal-blackened clothes on a washboard was a time consuming, backbreaking, and knuckle-bruising task" (Stepenoff 1999:48). Likewise, cleaning mine houses, especially those located near culm banks, breakers, or the mines themselves, was a constant and all-consuming chore. Dirt and rock particles coated houses, possessions, and people inside and out. The size of families also impacted women's domestic work. Religious beliefs, ethnic traditions, and a lack of access to reliable birth control meant large families. Women had to care for infants and watch toddlers in addition to all of their other responsibilities. As families grew progressively larger and older children grew up, older female children would often help take on many of the child care and nurturing responsibilities for their younger siblings (PD, interview 5 July 2018). Feeding those

large families was also a chore. With few funds, families relied heavily on subsistence gardens that often occupied the majority of the houselot (see Section 2 Chapter 5). While maintaining and working in the garden was generally the responsibility of both men and women in the household<sup>29</sup>, the processing of fruits and vegetables, including through canning and preserving, was a woman's task. Caring for livestock, including chickens, goats, pigs, and cows, would also have fallen to women. Women were responsible for providing meals for the family, and for rationing out calories and nutrition to those who needed it most when money was tight and food was scarce (EY and EY, interview 2014; see Byington 1910:64). In an instance where productive labor placed restraints on reproductive labor, working men's unpredictable and changing work hours meant that they could easily fall into the "bad habit of eating at odd times," which further placed stress on women to provide meals at unstandard hours (Byington 1910:64). All of these tasks were socially expected as part of women's participation in the 'domestic' sphere. However, women also found ways to benefit financially from these and other forms of 'women's work' that women were culturally permitted to engage in.

Many households in coal company towns used women's domestic labor to economically supplement the household's income. These activities represented extensions of labor that women were already performing at home. Such activities including taking in laundry, given-out textile work, taking in boarders, and home food canning and production. Because these are tasks that women would have been expected

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<sup>29</sup> Although oral histories and modern ethnographic examples indicate that gardens were and are mainly the responsibility of men, historic comparative examples indicate that in the early 1900s, women in company towns were largely responsible for maintaining gardens (MD, personal communication; see Byington 1910).



to undertake in their daily lives, they served as a way to make more money while not risking the moral capital of the household or the woman's social reputation.

Given-out textile work had served as an important form of economic supplementation that women could complete at home since the first decades after the country's founding had largely fallen out of favor as the large number of women engaging in the practice drove down pay. Given-out work is a system of ready-to-wear textile production that involves brokers who drop off the raw materials for an article of clothing. Women and/or children complete the production of the article at home, and the broker then returns to collect the finished article of clothing and pays the producer a set price per article produced. By the 1830s, the low pay of these "sewing women" was a national scandal (Kessler Harris 1982:30). Because the limited records available from workers themselves do not indicate whether women in the anthracite region were engaging in given out textile work and the ephemeral nature of the work itself means that it is unlikely to appear in the archaeological record, it is impossible to say with certainty whether women did engage with this form of home production; however, the option would have been available to them, especially in the early years of Eckley's existence.

Taking in boarders was a popular form of economic supplementation across America throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rapid urbanization in cities necessitated the housing of families with non-family members. Between 15-20% of urban houses in the country hosted boarders or lodgers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Modell and Hareven 1973). However, rates of boarding were significantly higher in industrial contexts. A study from 1912 done in Lawrence, Massachusetts, indicates that 90% of single-income male-headed households also took in boarders; however, even amongst families with more than one

wage earner, approximately 50% also kept boarders (Congress 1912). For immigrant families, in particular, boarders provided an important form of household income (see Byington 1910). Boarders were typically from the families' country of origin, which helped to reinforce ethnic identities and ties to the ethnic community. Kessler Harris (1982:125) reports that in one New England textile company town, over 90% of the houses with boarders were headed by foreign-born individuals. Boarders were particularly suited to a working class identity, where large families and the presence of unrelated adults within the household were commonplace (Hawes and Nybakken 2001). Boarders in coal mining company towns were traditionally single men, although census records from Eckley show that married couples as well as small families also lived as boarders (United States Census Bureau 1860, 1870, 1880). In company town contexts, boarders typically cooked their own food or paid the woman of the house to cook food that they provided (see O'Connor 1915).

Families who were able to produce enough food to sustain their household for the entire year had a major economic advantage over families who could not. Women were responsible for home-canning, drying, and preserving the fresh fruits and vegetables houselot gardens and foraging produced as well as for acquiring the bulk foods families could not produce themselves (Blatz 2003, Westmont 2017; see Chicone 2011). Companies even went so far as to provide small cellars beneath some company houses to provide a place to store these goods, although oral histories also indicate that the spaces companies provided did not suffice and women often resorted to digging out areas under their houses themselves in order to gain more storage space (Blatz 2003, PD, PD, interview 5 July 2018). Food canning and preparation, a distinctly gendered task,

demonstrate the true pressures placed upon working class women, especially those in company town contexts. Evidence from the company town of Berwind, Colorado, indicates that the presence of boarders increased household income enough (and justified the expense) of purchasing more canned goods versus producing home-canned goods (Wood 2002b, 2009); however, Chicone (2011:129) also urges archaeologists to assess these types of consumption choices not only in terms of relative status conference, but also in terms of lived experiences: taking in boarders would have increased the domestic labor demands on women, and resorting to purchasing canned goods instead of canning their own goods could equally be a reflection of women's limited time schedules and their need to optimize efficiency in the home.

Laundry was a form of economic supplementation that has some level of visibility in the archaeological record. The taking in of laundry and the mending of clothes can result in excess sewing implements as well as loose buttons in the archaeological record. While none of the houses at Eckley or Pardeesville had buttons or sewing implements in numbers that would obviously indicate the presence of laundry, the absence of these items does not mean that women were not taking in laundry as a form of supplemental income. Laundry and other such activities done in the home helped to maintain the image of the ideal family home (Seifert 1991:84). As working class women sought respectability for themselves and their families, being able to procure additional funds while maintaining their gendered roles would have been an attractive (though exhausting) option.

An additional form of economic supplementation that appears to have been unique to the anthracite region was the ability of women (and teenaged children) to make

money by foraging or harvesting produce. Several oral histories from Pardeesville attest to the summertime practice of wild blueberry picking. In the 1930s and 1940s, but likely beginning even earlier, men would take married women from the company towns into the hills early in the morning and drop them off to pick blueberries. The men would then return in the afternoon, pay the women a set price per bushel of berries, and take the women back to their company towns (GD, interview, 2014; AF, interview, 2018). Women living in Pardeesville also went to nearby Drums, a farming community, where they were paid to pick crops during the summer (GD, interview, 2014). Both of these activities represent extensions of women's domestic labor because these types of activities would have been expected from women in their own households.

### *Children's Labor*

The social flux brought about by the industrial revolution did not end with the establishment of men in the public sphere and women in the private sphere. Although society demanded the ideal woman to stay home and raise children, economic and class realities made that goal increasingly unattainable as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed. Industrial contexts, in particular, pressured women to enter the labor force or otherwise find additional income for large families. Dangerous working conditions created legions of widows and women supporting diseased or disabled men. The arrival of the Civil War and its resulting war casualties added to the reasons for women's entrée into the work force (Kessler Harris 1982:122). By 1880, working women consisted of 13.5% of the economic bread winners nationally and comprised 15.4% of employees in manufacturing positions. By 1900, bread winning women were 16.6% nationally, and woman comprised

16.9% of the manufacturing labor force (Bosworth and Baldwin 1911:5). Investigatory reports from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century revealed that, contrary to popular belief, the majority of women were working for economic subsistence, not ‘pin money’. These investigations also revealed the women were routinely paid less than their male counterparts because of assumptions on the inferiority of women in general and women’s lack of opportunity for advancement because their labor was seen as temporary (Bosworth and Baldwin 1911; Schreiner 1911). Perhaps it is because of the inferior rates of pay that immigrant women, in particular, refused to sacrifice their class respectability and their labor in the home for wage work; whatever the reasoning, the majority of women in the anthracite region in the 19<sup>th</sup> and through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century chose to send their children into the factories rather than go themselves.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, women’s marriage status and ethnic background served as the biggest indicators of whether they would engage in the paid labor force (Kessler Harris 1982:123). Low-income black women and their daughters joined and stayed in the labor force after the Civil War at rates higher than those of white women, even when husband’s occupation and family income are accounted for. However, married immigrant women were identified as having the lowest employment rates in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Instead, many immigrant families and especially those from Eastern and Southern Europe, relied on a strategy of child labor that kept the mother at home (Goldin 1977).

Girls.

In the Pennsylvania anthracite region, a symbiotic relationship between textile mill owners and the working classes developed. A 1918 publication by the Duplan Silk Corporation in honor of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of their mill in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, recounted the origins of the company's decision to build a mill in Hazleton, in a location that was uniquely ill-suited for hosting a silk mill:

Thoroughly discouraged and unanimous in their decision to consider Hazleton no further, the visitors suddenly happened upon a public school at the time the children were being dismissed. In a few moments they were surrounded by a crowd of rosy-cheeked, happy-faced youngsters, and out of the building there seemed to issue an endless stream of the same kind... Upon being told that there were ten or fifteen more such schools in the city and surrounding townships, the disadvantages of the location were sufficiently outweighed to permit Hazleton to take its place on the list of towns eligible for the proposed mill (Duplan Silk Corporation 1918:4).

In spite of the fact that Jean Duplan had remarked that Hazleton lacked the population density necessary to support a mill of the size the Duplan Corporation planned to build,<sup>30</sup> that “the best tract of land available seemed a sort of ‘no man’s land’ ornamented with mine caves and traversed by an open sewer”, and that Hazleton was located on top of a mountain whereas the optimal location for a silk mill is a “misty valley to insure proper humidity,” the presence of large numbers of children was not only enough to sway the company’s board into reconsidering the town as an option for the mill, but to then locate the mill in that town (1918:4). The company’s 1918 publication indicates that the only advantages Hazleton had to offer over the other proposed mill locations was, in fact, the presence of the children and the Hazleton Board of Trade’s willingness to donate a

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<sup>30</sup> In fact, the Hazleton Board of Trade had lied to Duplan about the size of the city, claiming that the population was upwards of 25,000 individuals when the census had indicated there was little more than 10,000 (Duplan Silk Corporation 1918:4)

significant amount of land for the mill site. Stepenoff (1999:29) observes that leaders in the silk industry proudly admitted that they located their plants in Pennsylvania because of the high availability of cheap labor in the form of women and children. This coincides with historical observations that the location of silk factories in the United States was closely related to the types of labor available in those locations (e.g. Matsui 1930).

In this specific cultural and historical context, it is important to keep in mind that child labor was not unusual. Children had been an integral part of domestic labor on family farms for centuries; the introduction of industrialization simply shifted children's labor from the home, where it was often invisible, into the factory where its presence was much more apparent and quickly noted by social reformers (Stepenoff 1999:15). City leaders portrayed the gendered employment of coal mining, which relied largely on male workers, as an asset for textile mills, which relied largely on female workers, in their attempts to recruit textile milling operations to move to Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania was an attractive destination for manufacturing for other reasons: lax government oversight and the absence of unions<sup>31</sup> provided opportunities for manufacturers that they did not have in New England, where textile manufacturing was originally established in the United States (Stepenoff 1999). A reliance on girls' and women's labor meant that employers were receiving the cheapest labor available on the market, and, since factory work was sold to families as being good for young women in developing values related to hard-work and industriousness, promoted the idea that factories were giving back to their communities in more than just an economic way. Even within the field, Pennsylvania's

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<sup>31</sup> The first union to be established in the anthracite region was the Workingmen's Benevolent Association in 1868, although this union was for anthracite workers and collapsed after a failed strike in 1875 (Schlegel 1943). The first textile mill to be opened in the anthracite region opened in Scranton in 1873 (Stepenoff 1999).

silk workers were paid less than their counterparts in silk mills in other parts of the country, such as Paterson, New Jersey (Stepenoff 1999:30). Because women were expected to leave the factory when they were married, employers justified keeping pay low by arguing that women's factory work was not a career, but instead a phase of personal development and training.

This series of circumstances meant that child labor, especially in the form of girls working in textile mills, was common in the Pennsylvania anthracite region. The legal minimum age of employment at the turn of the 20th century for the silk industry in Pennsylvania was 12 (Stepenoff 1999:33). A government investigation of data from 1900 found that only 4.3% of the women working in textile mills in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, were married, compared with 13.1% of women working in mills in Paterson, New Jersey. Meanwhile, in those same Pennsylvania mills, approximately 23.2% of employees were under the age of 16 (United States Congress 1911:59). Estimates from the early 20th century pegged the number of Pennsylvania's silk mill workers under the age of 22 as being as high as 60-70% of the workforce (Stepenoff 1999:14). By 1910, 5,000 children, mostly girls, under the age of 16 worked in Pennsylvania silk mills – the highest number of any industry in the state (1999:14).

While factory owners argued that employing young women as wage worker was a form of character building, social reformers saw things differently. Girls working in textile mills were highlighted by middle class reformers for the damage that industrial work was doing to workers. Reformers highlighted the dangers child laborers faced, noting that the work expected from children in a domestic context, such as that on a farm, did not place children in the monotonous and life-threatening situations that industrial



work regularly did (Stepenoff 1999:15; Trattner 1970). Muckraking journalists reported on girls as young as eight working ten hours shifts, that girls could go lame or deaf from the working conditions, that girls had to cut their hair to prevent it from getting caught in machinery (Stepenoff 1999:15; see Figure 7). However, even these arguments were generally phrased in a way to elicit sympathy for the young workers who were portrayed as “waif-like, fragile beings unable to speak for themselves and in need of protection from strong adult males” (Stepenoff 1999:16). The gendered dynamics of reformers’ efforts – by focusing on the need to preserve girl workers’ fragility, while focusing on the fact that child labor was wrong in their arguments against boy workers’ employment – reveals that gender role expectations thoroughly permeated every aspect of workers’ identities.

#### Boys.

Girls, of course, were not the only children being sent to work. Boys were also regularly sent to the breaker or the coal mine in order to bring additional income into the household. Although boys worked in textile mills in other parts of the country, part of the strict gender segregation between young men’s and young women’s occupations in the anthracite region was due to the fact that young men could earn more working in the breaker than they could in the textile mill, making work in the breaker more attractive for families who were sending their children to work in order to supplement the household income (Stepenoff 1999). Unlike girls, however, boys’ beginnings in the breaker often served as a foundation for a career in the mines, with boys moving up through the different positions in the colliery as they aged (Crane 1894).

Also similarly to girls' labor, boys often had no control over the wages they earned. Because boys were most likely to go to work for the same company as their fathers, boys' wages were often simply added to the family's account and went towards debts the family owed to the company, such as for purchases at the store or for rent (Keil and Keil 2014). However, these contributions likely served in many cases as the deciding factor between homelessness and starvation and a family's continued survival.

Working conditions for boys sent to work in the breakers (typically the youngest boys) were bad. Reported one journalist who toured a coal mine and breaker in 1894 for the popular *McClure's Magazine*:

The dust lay inches deep on every motionless thing, and clouds of it made the air dark as from a violent tempest. A mighty gnashing sound filled the ears. With terrible appetite this huge and hideous monster sat imperturbably munching coal, grindings its mammoth jaws with unearthly and monotonous uproar. In a large room sat the little slate pickers. The floor slanted at an angle of forty-five degrees, and the coal, having been masticated by the great teeth, was streaming sluggishly in long iron troughs. The boys sat straddling these troughs, and as the mass moved slowly, they grabbed deftly at the pieces of slate therein. There were five or six of them, one above another, over each trough... The howling machinery was above them. High up, dim figures moved about in the dust clouds. These little men were a terrifically dirty band... Meanwhile they live in a place of infernal dins. The crash and thunder of the machinery is like the roar of an immense cataract. The room shrieks and blares and bellows. Clouds of dust blur the air until the windows shine pallidly afar off. All the structure is a-tremble from the heavy sweep and circle of the ponderous mechanism. Down in the midst of it sit these tiny urchins, where they earn fifty-five cents a day each. They breathe this atmosphere until their lungs grow heavy and sick with it.

The work was dangerous, both through the inhalation of coal dust as well as the workers' precarious perches above heavy equipment. Workers, both young and old, died in the breaker. A short note in the October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1890 edition of the *Freeland Tribune* recounted that a married Hungarian man named John Nemiots had been killed at No. 5 Eckley when he fell into the rollers. Rollers refers to the first stage in the coal breaking process in

which coal is forced between two cast iron cylinders. The newspaper reported that Nemio's "was crushed out of shape" (FT, 9 October 1890). In another instance, 15 year old William Linderman, the sole financial support for his widowed mother and siblings, died in a breaker at Lattimer No. 3 when he was caught in a conveyor belt and crushed (Wilkes Barre Times Leader, 27 July 1897:3; Roller 2015). In both cases, the loss of the worker would have had incredible and life-changing implications for the families they left behind.

A report from 1907 on breaker boys in the anthracite region found that, although boys under 16 accounted for 48.4% of slate pickers, 75% of the slate pickers that had been killed in Pennsylvania's anthracite breakers in 1905 were under the age of 16, making someone under the age of 16 three times more likely to die on the job than an adult performing the same job (Lovejoy 1907:46). Additionally, the rates of fatalities were *rising*, even as improved technologies meant that they should be declining; Lovejoy cited the increasing number of child workers as the reason for this increase in accidents (1907:44). This report was part of a larger investigation that discovered that, although it was illegal in Pennsylvania to employ anyone under the age of 14 in an anthracite breaker or under the age of 16 in an anthracite mine, both laws were unenforced – and with devastating consequences.<sup>32</sup> Although all companies were required to have children show proof of age documentation before being eligible to work, the investigation in 1905 by the National Child Labor Committee found that 760 workers that had been classified as being over 14 were, in fact, under aged, representing 9% of the total number of employees inspected (Lovejoy 1907:42). Establishing a worker's age required a parent to

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<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, the age limit for Pennsylvania's bituminous mines was 12 years of age for both working in the mine and the breaker (see Lovejoy 1907:47).

simply sign an affidavit attesting to the birthdate of the child, and being that oftentimes it was the parents who were encouraging the child to go to work in the first place, parents and guardians were all too willing to forge or lie on these documents. The Department of Mine Inspection even admitted in a memo included in his 1905 report that “the difficult thing is to get at the correct ages of these boys, as at least seventy-five per cent of them were born in foreign countries. Besides this, the department has neither the time nor money to spend in prosecuting the parents of guardians of these children” (James Roderick quoted in Pennsylvania Department of Mines 1906:xxvii).

### *Women Roles in Labor Disputes*

Women’s investment in their husbands’ wage work is underscored by the active presence of women in strikes and picketing activities. Reported one coal mine super intendent to Congress following the 1888 anthracite strike, “In many cases where new men [strike breakers or scabs] have been at work – in one case where but a few could work in repairing damages from a fire – men and boys have collected and hooted and hallooed at these men on their return home. Women have gathered in large numbers and pelted them with frozen turnips, meat, and bread, and such things. This was because the women were put to the front [of the picket line] and the men stood in the background” (S.B. Whitting testimony in United States Congress 1889:145-146). Immigrant women, however, had good reason to support male family members on strike: a report from 1905 found that non-English speaking miners and mine laborers were at a higher risk of being killed or injured in a mine than their English-speaking counterparts (Lovejoy 1907:47). Life for the wives of men killed or severely injured in the coal mines was incredibly difficult,

leading women to have a vested interest in supporting men as they fought for better pay and working conditions.

In Jay Hambidge's 1898 tour of Lattimer No. 2, he speaks at length of a woman he refers to as 'Big Mary'. Alternately calling her Hungarian and Polish, Hambidge seems most intimidated by Mary's willingness to play an active role in mining strikes.

Hambidge (1898:825) relates his impression of Mary in a colorful tone:

Mary is by far the most forcible and picturesque character in all the mining region. In her peculiar way she is a queen, and rules things with a high hand. During the strike Mary was the most troublesome of all the foreigners. No professional agitator had half the force for mischief that this woman exerted. One day she led seventy-five women of the patch in a charge on the troops. At the time these amazons were armed with clubs and pieces of scrap-iron, and they stopped only when they felt the bayonets of the immovable line of soldiery.

Hambidge's fascination with Mary appears to stem from her willingness to take a leading role in the attempted rebuff of the Coal and Iron Police. His extended discussion of this woman, in particular, especially considering she is the only woman discussed in the article by name, indicates the clear deviation from middle and upper class gendered expectations. Given the fact that Hambidge's article is interwoven with repeated references to the inhumanity and un-American-ness of the immigrant families that reside in the anthracite region, his characterization of Mary only reinforces these social divides between 'us' (native-born Americans) and 'them' (immigrants).

However, women's willingness to fight for what they deemed fair treatment was still heavily circumscribed by men as well as by other women due to their identities as women. When young women silk workers, the majority of them teenagers, at Klots Throwing Company in Carbondale, Pennsylvania, went on strike in December of 1900, their fathers, at the behest of the UMWA, began negotiating with the silk mill

superintendent on behalf of the workers (Stepenoff 1999:50). When the young women refused to accept the terms offered to the men, they reached out to Mary ‘Mother’ Jones to help them organize their own union, and even went so far as to mimic miners’ tactics for pressuring workers who remained on the job to go on strike by marching alongside them on their way home while playing fifes and drums (Stepenoff 1999:51). However, when Mother Jones arrived in the anthracite region, she twisted the workers’ narrative to be one of *child* exploitation rather than worker exploitation and ultimately used the platform and awareness raised by the striking girls to draw attention to the low wages paid to *miners*, who Jones argued would not have to send their children into factories if they received a ‘breadwinning’ wage (Stepenoff 1999:54). Again, the young women were deftly put back in their ‘proper’ societal position, with Jones outright condemning the workers’ parents for sending their daughters to work in a speech in Scranton (Scranton Republican [SR], 25 February 1901). Despite positive intentions, actions such as these reinforced the social construction of women as being unable to care for themselves – presenting a difficult conundrum in the working class instance where women were in fact expected to care for their entire family.

### *Managers Conclusion*

Women in the anthracite region had immense responsibilities to contend with. As women performed their duties in the house and allocated their as well as their children’s limited labor potential in an effort to better their financial situations, they came up against social expectations and notions of propriety. While middle class reformers harangued working class women for choosing to send their children to work, working class women continued

to manage their situations as best they could. This discussion of women's economic duties within the home sheds light on the domestic sphere and upends the image of the unproductive housewife. Although this role has fewer material goods associated with it, the multiple economic and social roles that women carried out within their houses is important for understanding the context of working class women and will become important in discussions on architecture presented later in this dissertation.

### Matrons

The difficult lives women in the anthracite region led didn't stop them from dressing up. Despite finding few traces of jewelry archaeologically, Victoria Y.'s descendants recounted the ways that Victoria's husband, Ralph, used the props of femininity in order to stay in Victoria's good graces when he erred.

PD: "He would go to work and he would come home and he would be drinking a little bit after work and to not piss her off, he would bring her jewelry"

Interviewer: "And where did he work?"

PD: "In the mines."

(PD, interview, 5 July 2018)

While Ralph used jewelry to keep his wife happy, jewelry as well as other forms of women's physical appearance are part of a larger gender role that involved the embodiment of femininity (Figure 34). This section will discuss, the role of women's physical appearances in denoting



Figure 34. Victoria (left) wearing pearl necklace, 1940s. Image courtesy Victoria's family.

identity did not end with jewelry, but also included make up and clothing, all of which are visible archaeologically and will be discussed in further detail here.

While the previous three discussions have explored actions and responsibilities that women in the anthracite region had and were expected to perform as part of being ‘women’, this section turns to look at the way women created themselves through material goods including jewelry, clothing, and make up. By examining the ways that women transformed themselves physically to acquiesce to the notion of what a proper woman should look like, women in the anthracite region were making choices about their identities and working to cement their persona within the larger community.

In the same ways that behavioral performances were used to represent and enact individuals’ identities, appearances also constitute a performance – in this case, of gender and class identities. As early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, women were vocal about the power of appearances. Mary Wollstonecraft, author of *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, noted that, “Taught from infancy that beauty is woman’s sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming around its gilt cage, only seeks to adore its prison” (1792:53). Fulfilling the social expectations of what a woman should *look* like provided women with the benefits of holding that identity; choosing not to fulfill those expectations, such as through cross-dressing, would have been identified as aberrant behavior and resulted in social scorn in the same way that performing tasks generally associated with men (such as working outside the home) was also treated with social disapproval.

The construction of appearance and the materials used to achieve those constructions have received a wide and varied theoretical approach. A Latourian approach emphasizes the agency of clothing in shaping human behavior through the



object's own construction, such as through the restriction of movement or the imposition of identities (such as through uniforms) on a person (e.g. Crane 2000, Klepp and Bjerck 2014), although this train of thought ultimately ignores the larger societal question of why women choose to engage with these objects at all. Feminist theorists have taken a different perspective, such as in Morgan's suggestion that women's motivation for making modifications to their physical appearance ultimately resides with being successful within a patriarchal system. Morgan (1991:32) states, "For virtually all women as women, success is defined in terms of interlocking patterns of compulsion: compulsory attractiveness, compulsory motherhood, and compulsory heterosexuality... women's attractiveness is defined as attractive-to-men." While the power dynamics of gender undoubtedly coerced many women to obey the dictates of a male-dominated society, this perspective denies women's agency in their decision of whether and how to abide by these dictates. I argue that what Morgan sees as women's attempts to increase their "beauty, fertility, [and] the appearance of heterosexuality" in order to become more attractive to men can also be read as women's way of consciously adapting their behavior and appearance to leverage greater respect or social capital and as an outward expression of a sincerely held identity (1991:32). In this view, rather than an attempt to gain the attention of men, women use their outward appearance as a form of social power.

Here I will discuss three forms of appearance-altering material culture – clothes, jewelry, and cosmetics – and their roles in shaping and conveying women's identities in the working class population of the Pennsylvania anthracite region.

## *Clothes*

Clothing is one of the most visible forms of consumption and, as a direct derivative of those choices, of social identity; therefore, clothing is often imbued with meaning (Crane 2000:1-2). The way that people present themselves is heavily influenced by cultural thinking, but also reveals individual's own interpretations of those cultural concepts. Because clothing has norms related to different forms of identity (known as fashions), clothing reflects how people identify themselves within their specific set of social structures. Clothing can be used to denote occupation, cultural or ethnic affiliation, class, gender, and religion in a public manner, whether real or aspirational. The role of clothing in helping people negotiate and construct identities, especially as consumers, cannot be understated (2000).

Women's clothing has been heavily regulated throughout history, but the meaning and availability of clothes changed drastically following the introduction of the Industrial Revolution (Crane 2000). Although popular etiquette and lifestyle books from the turn of the 20th century made statements such as "to be comfortably and becoming clothed, is an acknowledged aspiration of most women and many men," society's standards for clothing often made such goals impossible (Harland and Water 1905:159). Although a person's clothes were among an individual's most expensive possession through the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, women's wear was already being positioned as a (heavily socially regulated) consumer good by etiquette manuals aimed at newly created middle-class audiences by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Middle and upper class women were expected to don multiple outfits throughout the day based on where they were and what time it was. "Let your style of dress always be appropriate to the hour of the day," the

1875 Routledge etiquette manual suggests. “To dress too finely in the morning, or to be seen in a morning dress in the evening, is equally vulgar and out of place. Light and inexpensive materials are fittest for morning wear; dark silk dresses for the promenade or carriage; and low dresses of rich or transparent stuffs for the dinner and ball... Never dress very richly or showily in the street... At small dinner parties, low dresses are not so indispensable... At large dinners only the fullest dress is appropriate... Never be seen in the street without gloves... Finally, every lady should remember that to dress well is a duty which she owes to society” (Routledge 1875:12-14). Even mourning was regimented. Women were expected to dress in full mourning for one year, followed by half mourning for one additional year after a death. Godey’s Lady’s Book set outlines of what types of dresses and in what materials were appropriate for various women members of the family during these periods, with changing styles reflected in the prescriptive literature’s recommendations (Bell 2004: 87). Women in mourning were specifically prohibited from dancing, further regulating women’s social behaviors (Routledge 1875:13). These types of norms and fashion regulations helped to mark class distinctions within populations, as the decreasing cost of cloth and the increasing availability of clothes meant the new forms of consumption to separate the wealthy from the non-wealthy were needed. Fashion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, then, served as its own form conspicuous consumption alongside a variety of other consumer objects (Crane 2000; Veblen 1899).

The high maintenance fashion trends covered in women’s etiquette guides were likely outside of the economic realities of most working class women. Clothes often represented an indulgence for both the working and upper classes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century,

although fashion trends followed by members of the upper classes meant that middle and upper class women (as well as those who sought to emulate them) ended up allocating sizable portions of their income to purchasing clothes (Crane 2000:4). However, the wider availability of clothes due to mass production towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also meant that clothing became, for the first time, a democratized good. However, Crane (2000:4) indicates this phenomenon was limited to America and might reflect greater cultural narratives and ambitions about social mobility. Because people *felt* that they could transcend their class status through hard work, American women spent more time and energy pursuing fashion trends that displayed social status, thereby equalizing American women's clothing consumption to a greater extent than their European counterparts (Banner 1984; see McCracken 1986). In order to retain class differences, social boundary setters resorted back to class-designated behaviors (one of Bourdieu's three forms of social capital) in order to differentiate class statuses. One etiquette guide reminded readers that, "To dress well requires something more than a full purse and a pretty figure. It needs taste, good sense, and refinement. Dress may almost be classes as one of the fine arts. It is certainty one of those arts, the cultivation of which is indispensable to any person moving in the upper or middle classes of society" (Routledge 1875: 12).

Clothes are one of the most visible symbols of ethnicity (Crane 2000). The retention and wearing of traditional clothing could be used to promote ethnic identities, although many immigrants chose to discard their traditional clothing as a way to establishing new identities in the United States (Heinze 1990). While the idea of discarding ethnic identity through the removal of ethnic clothing does not seem to be

reflected in the lived experiences of anthracite region migrants, many of whom actively held on to their ethnic identities through ethnic-based fraternal organizations and ethnic churches, the selective use of ethnic symbols – symbols that connote social difference – can be seen as a way of both adopting identities as Americans while retaining aspects of their respective Old World identities, the combination of which could be used in different circumstances to achieve different aims (see Barth 1969, McGuire 1982). Photographs from the anthracite region in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century show migrants wearing American-



Figure 35. Victoria and Ralph wearing American-style clothing, date unknown. Image courtesy Victoria's family.

style clothing (Figure 35). The fact that immigrant women, especially in their roles as culture bearers, would have known how to make traditional ethnic-style clothes and *chose* not to demonstrates the conscious act of self-identification for women.

The 20th century and the increased availability of ready-to-wear fashions at progressively lower prices has meant that clothes have come to represent personal identities to an even greater extent. Subcultures can now choose to purchase items

that specifically reflect their unique confluence of identities. In this instance, the array of options brought about by mass production and the practice of commodity fetishism has effectively neutered clothing of its class connotations. Although this practice is most

common today, the roots of this increasing availability and the decreasing connections between fashion and class can be traced to the 1930s and 1940s.

Because clothing is usually made from organic materials, it rarely enters into the archaeological record. However, a unique find from Pardeesville has shed some light on fashion and women's consumption habits in anthracite company towns. Although these items were not recovered from one of the five domestic contexts analyzed as part of this dissertation, they will be discussed here because of their importance for understanding the consumption choices that faced women at the five other residences.

At the excavations in Pardeesville, 164 nylon stockings representing a single depositional episode were recovered. They were the 'fully fashioned' style, which was popular from the 1940s to the 1960s



Figure 36. Selected stockings recovered from 222 Lower Street. Stockings are a form of faux material culture (imitates silk) that working class women used to live a middle class lifestyle.

(Figure 36).<sup>33</sup> These stockings were deposited during a mid- to late-20th century privy filling episode, possibly related to the death of one of the elderly sisters who had lived in the house. The stockings are all nude-colored although a limited number also feature a

<sup>33</sup> These stockings represent those that were collected as part of the excavation. Additional stockings present in the privy were not recovered because of the excavators' initial decision to sample the stockings rather than collect them all. Although the author attempted to recover as many discarded stockings as possible, an unknown number were irretrievable.

black back seam as was popular in the 1940s. Census records indicate that at least one of the women who lived in the house during the 1930s and 1940s worked in a textile mill (United States Census Bureau 1930, 1940).

To understand the importance of this find, one has to understand the cultural connotations of nylon. Nylon stockings started a small cultural revolution when they were introduced by the DuPont Company in 1939. Cheaper, easier to clean, and more durable than silk, DuPont's synthetic creation found an eager and ready market as women's fashions meant hemlines continued to rise and women needed something to maintain their 'respectability'. In a massively successful public relations stunt, DuPont began by introducing the product to the public at the 1940 New York World's Fair. With public interest piqued, DuPont then declared May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1940 as "N Day" and released to the public 780,000 pairs of nylon stockings at a price of \$1.15 per pair (the same price as silk stockings) into department stores across the country for the first time. The stockings "sold out almost at once," even though stores were limiting purchases to one pair per customer (Handley 1999:46). The arrival of World War II meant that nylon production was diverted to parachutes and rope manufacturing, and nylon stockings disappeared from the consumer market (Handley 1999, Spivack 2012a). Some women found creative ways of adapting to the shortage, such as through the application of paint-on hosiery and 'liquid' stockings, as foregoing nylon for the war effort was spun as a patriotic act (Spivack 2012b). Others not concerned with their level of patriotism meanwhile paid upwards of \$10 to \$12 per pair on the black market (Handley 1999:48). Although a chemical substitute for silk had long been thought impossible to sell to a chemical-averse public, DuPont's success with nylon (which they also began incorporating into corsets

and lingerie as well as men's ties and socks) demonstrated how consumers could be manipulated into accepting new products. This culture shift was especially apparent by 1941, when silk stockings had decreased to \$1.00 per pair while nylons had increased to \$2.50 per pair, yet nylon retained its command of the stocking market (Handley 1999:46).

The presence of these stockings in this context provides an interesting insight into the choices made by working class anthracite women. Nylon stockings during the 1940s (as several pairs, especially those with the black seam, likely date to) would have held tremendous consumer status due to their newness and high demand. Even though nylon represented a brand new, untested technology, the adoption of nylon stockings by anthracite women demonstrates their open-mindedness – as well as their susceptibility of influence by marketing. Additionally, women in 1940 on average purchased eight pairs of stockings per year, meaning that the collection of 164 stockings representing at least 88 pairs demonstrates a repeated, long-term consumption strategy (Spivack 2012a).

However, neither sister residing in the house in which the stockings were recovered had a spouse in 1940. This indicates that either one or both of these women were choosing to dress according to the cultural standards for women of the day on their own accord, possibly with little to no pressure from family. These consumption choices, then, are a reflection of women's own decisions about her appearance and her desire to be culturally appropriate by following the contemporary fashion trends. As stockings were accepted as part of a middle and upper class wardrobes, the wearing of stockings in numbers that suggest they were used daily could represent a woman who sought to appear polished and middle class.



However, this is combined with the depositional characteristic of these stockings. Women often saved old clothes, including stockings, to be re-used for a variety of home projects, including as pillow stuffing or for making rag rugs. Stockings were particularly sought-after for use as warp in rag rugs (PS, interview 2014; JU, personal communication). The large number of stockings accumulated in the household, only to be disposed of in a single event, indicates that the women in the home were still resorting to working class home good production methods, even as they purchased the newest and most high tech stockings on the market. This duality characterizes the working class experience in the anthracite region in the 20th century as older, traditional forms of reuse and self-sufficiency lived side-by-side with adoptions of new ideas and middle-class consumer identities.

### *Glass and Plastic Jewels*

Jewelry and other related decorations are a universal form of personal adornment and have been used to mark status or rank for millennia (Victoria and Albert Museum n.d.). However, the arrival of the Industrial Revolution fundamentally re-defined the role that jewelry held as symbols of social rank (Gregoriotti 2000). By the turn of the 20th century, the puritanical attitudes against flashiness and blatant displays of wealth that had defined American polite society in the early 19th century were being disregarded (Harland and Water 1905:159). Women's home manuals and etiquette books, which provided social guidance and education for those with newfound class mobility, especially in the second half of the 19th century, played a large role in prescribing what jewelry women should wear as part of their class-defined costume. As early as the 1870s, etiquette writers were

warning that society and, in particular, women, were increasingly using jewelry as “a mere brag of the husband’s or father’s wealth” (Hartley 1872:299). One ladies’ etiquette writer noted that, “It is an indication that the growing wealth of the people is not accompanied by a corresponding refinement; but that the love of vulgar show, the low pride of ostentation, takes the place of a pure and elevated taste. The emulation with fashionable dames, now-a-days ... is to wear the largest diamonds” (Hartley 1872:299). The author’s distaste for showy jewelry is justified in her view by the argument that the correct usage of jewelry, not the quantity of it, is what truly denotes class and “elevated taste”. She further states that “if it is real, [jewelry] is too valuable to risk losing in the street, and if it is *not* real, no lady should wear it. Mock jewelry is utterly detestable” and, later, “dispense with ornaments altogether rather than wear mock jewelry” (Hartley 1872:110, 292, emphasis in original). Similar sentiments are conveyed in other etiquette books from the time (see Routledge 1875). Here we see the class disdain for faux signifiers of wealth and an attempt to maintain distance through social gatekeeping communicated to the masses through popular women’s etiquette and home manuals. From this exchange, we see the importance of jewelry in conveying social status and wealth simultaneously and can therefore place jewelry and jewels recovered from the coal town contexts into greater societal trends.

The types of jewels worn were also socially prescribed. Unmarried and young women were expected to only wear pearls, while married women were allowed to wear a much broader array of stones, but only at certain times: “diamonds, pearls, rubies, and all transparent precious stones belong to evening dress, and should on no account be worn before dinner” (Routledge 1875:13). Others suggested than women limit themselves

specifically to pearls and diamonds (see Hartley 1872). Further, although semi-synthetic imitation jewels were not yet widely available, imitations in the form of colored glass were. Several etiquette guides recommend that women of class choose unusual, exotic, or “recherché styles of feminine ornament” in order to set herself apart from women who only mimicked fashionable tastes (see Hale and Godey 1863:237). Routledge’s etiquette book goes as far as to highlight the fact that jewelry is not about cost, but rather about a demonstration of taste, citing that it is better to own a “more *distingue* possession than a large brilliant which any rich and tasteless vulgarian can buy as easily as yourself. Of all precious stones, the opal is one of the most lovely and least commonplace. No vulgar woman purchases an opal. She invariably prefers the most showy ruby, emerald, or sapphire” (Routledge 1875:14). This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the majority of fake gemstones recovered from Eckley were colored stones, such as faux emeralds and sapphires. The presence of pendants, glass and plastic faux jewels, and natural crystals indicates that residents still sought to perform the social cues of the high status ‘fashionable dames’ of the era through material culture and potentially claim some of that status themselves. In short, jewelry, which had been a mainstay of class distinction because of the inherent scarcity of the materials involved, increasingly became a point of contention once the availability of fake versions spread, leading the home and etiquette manuals of the day to resort to social gatekeeping through recommending difficult to replicate materials (such as opals) to middle class women in order to maintain social distance.

It is also important to note that although immigrant women and women in the anthracite region more generally might not have consumed these etiquette books, they

existed within a society in which these types of texts dictated the trends within the larger social and gendered schema of American society. The cultural patterns that emerged in terms of gender-based class taste and preference were emergent from, negotiated within, and disseminated by these types of publications, including the works of L.A. Godey (Hale and Godey 1863), Emily Thornwell (1857), Catherine Beecher (1873; Beecher and Stowe 1869), and, later, Amy Vanderbilt (1952) and Emily Post (1922). These social influences dictated the larger frameworks that shaped genteel femininity that then reverberated throughout society until these prescriptions became norms. Whether or not women actively engaged with the books themselves becomes irrelevant; their broader engagement with American middle class femininity, which is itself shaped by these works, is enough to indirectly connect women to gendered and class prescriptive literature.

A total of eight faux precious and semi-precious gem stones and one imitation ivory cameo were recovered from the excavations that took place on Back Street. No faux gemstones were recovered from the 217 Lower Street privy, although this disparity could represent a deposition bias due to the location of those excavations in a privy versus in and around the house foundation, as was done on Back Street. In other words, these small items were more likely to be lost inadvertently than to be intentionally discarded. Interestingly, no faux stones were recovered from 34 Back Street.

At 36 Back Street, a plastic, dark blue, oval-shaped faux sapphire as well as a plastic, teardrop-shaped, faceted faux amber drop pendant were recovered (Figure 37).

The faux sapphire was recovered from a shovel test pit excavated in the yard space of the house. It was recovered from the



Figure 37. Faux amber drop pendant and fake sapphire.

uppermost stratum, meaning it dates to the twentieth century. The faux amber piece was in an area associated with the crawlspace under the houses, found in a context with artifacts dating to the first decades of the twentieth century (Westmont 2017). The presence of the faux amber pendant is particularly interesting as amber itself is considered only semi-precious due to its relative natural abundance. This indicates that manufacturers were willing to make faux versions of even comparatively inexpensive gems. Because the barriers to ownership were substantially reduced for all gemstones, not just the most expensive, witnessing the consumption of a lower status gemstone (amber) reveals potential personal choice or preference on behalf of the consumer and reiterates the dramatic shifts that the Industrial Revolution brought to the jewelry industry. It also reveals how consumers continued to draw on Bernays' suggestion that certain things could bring fulfillment to one's life through ownership in a fetishization of goods, even when fake.

House 38 at Eckley had two unusual forms of personal adornment: a white oval pressed milk glass cameo and a cupric alloy cross pendant featuring faux sapphire and faux turquoise insets (Figure 38). The cameo was recovered from the yard space directly behind the house from the uppermost stratum. This stratum features artifacts that were likely deposited between 1905 and 1950 (Westmont 2017). Included here because of cameos' role as personal decoration, the



Figure 38. Milk glass cameo.

carved ivory, mother-of-pearl, and onyx, sardonyx, or agate carved-relief cameos that had gained cultural prominence during the Renaissance were already being replicated for the masses by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Gregorietti 2000). Wedgwood's introduction of the Wedgwood Cameo, which was made from molded jasperware ceramic pastes set on oval, circular, or octagonal disks and framed with gold, enabled cameos to be produced in such quantities that they were culturally adopted as elements of jewelry to be worn or displayed (Ormsbee 1956). The recovery of a small, milk glass cameo replica from Eckley is particularly interesting, as cameos continued to maintain a degree of cultural exclusivity even after etiquette manuals had begun denouncing imitations. The presence of this cameo then indicates that a woman residing at 38 Back Street might have been more aware of fashion trends of the time (see Hale and Godey 1863). Aside from the cameo, the cross pendant also proved to be a unique find (Figure 39). Unfortunately, little could be conclusively uncovered about the object's meaning or origin. It was recovered from the crawlspace of the house from a stratum that had deposited roughly between 1870 and 1905 (Westmont 2017). However, the presence of the faux gem-studded cross

pendant connects back to the plethora of other religious items recovered from this domestic context (including the gilded porcelain crucifix wall hanging and rosary beads), further underscoring the intersectionality of identities as communicated through individual's personal possessions, such as the enactment of religious identities and class identities together through the ownership of expensive (or seemingly expensive) personal and home religious decorations.

The excavations at 40 Back Street recovered several faux gemstones. These consisted of a colorless tear-drop shaped pendant, a faux round-cut faceted diamond, three small faux diamonds set linearly, and a green glass faceted oval faux emerald (Figure 40). The colorless faux gemstones were recovered from the yardspace directly behind the house from a stratum with artifacts that were likely deposited between 1854 and 1905. The faux emerald was from the same area of the yard but was found in the uppermost stratum, which was deposited between 1905 and 1950 (Westmont 2017). These items align with the societal expectations for prestige items that middle and upper class woman should have owned in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and overlap with the items that middle class etiquette guides were identifying as being at risk for being mimicked by “tasteless vulgarians”. Being that these gemstones are all fake, and the etiquette manuals were targeting

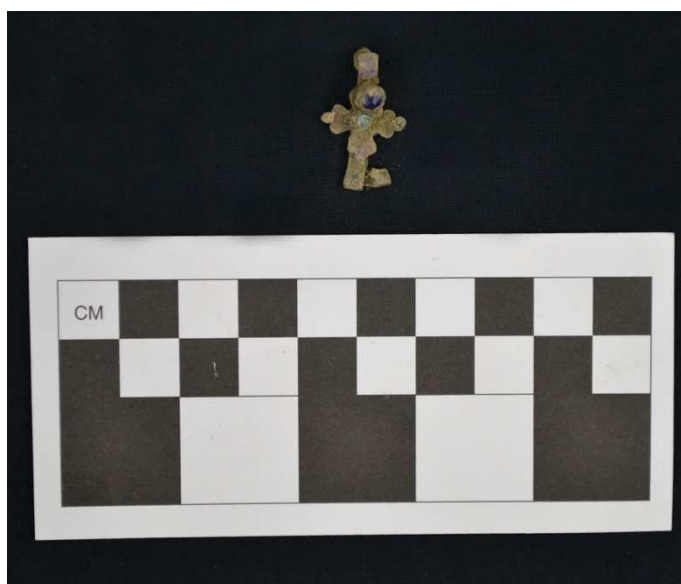


Figure 39. Cross pendant.

women who consumed fake jewels in particular, it is likely that individuals such as the working class women in the anthracite region were the exact social demographics that etiquette writers feared would succeed at joining the middle and upper classes through the increasingly ubiquity of faux prestige goods.

This assortment of personal decorative items, representing specifically items associated with the performance of middle class femininity, reveals how class aspirations and gender expectations coincided and coexisted in the everyday lives of women living in the anthracite region. Furthermore, the connections illustrated here between the prescriptive literature for women's jewelry and the presence of (imitations of) those same

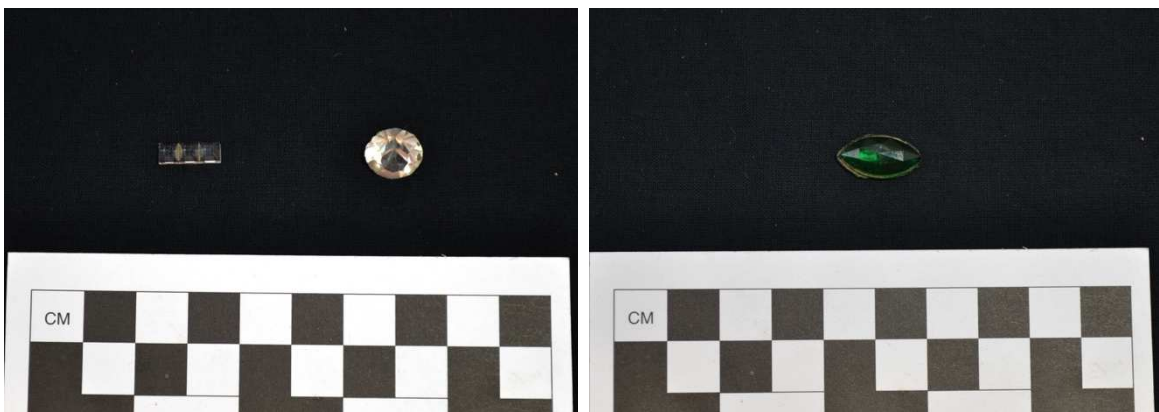


Figure 40. Faux diamonds (left), faux emerald (right) recovered from 40 Back Street.

items reveals the that women were, whether directly or indirectly, adopting and abiding (in unorthodox ways) by the gendered class norms that the social influencers were dictating within the material limitations of their economic realities. Although the mode of transmission of information is unknown, the adoption of the recommendations of the prescriptive literature also has an interesting implication for ethnic identity.

Overwhelmingly, gender prescriptive literature writers assumed several key pieces of information about their audiences: that they were “bent on self-improvement and, in many cases, social mobility and metropolitan fluency... [and that they were] seeking to



overcome real or imagined ‘disadvantages’ of birth, class, and training”; however, authors did not address migrants as a readership demographic (Kasson 1990:54). The guides largely presume a white, Christian (potentially Protestant), middle class identity; its lack of reference to ethnicity or the national identity of its reader implies that it assumes its reader also holds an American identity. This assumption is blatant in some instances, such as in books’ titles such as *The American Woman’s Home* (Beecher and Stowe 1869), *American Etiquette and Rules of Politeness* (Houghton 1883), or *Frost’s Laws and By-Laws of American Society* (Frost 1869), while more subtle in others. For instance, some authors speak of a communal country, such as Klein (1899: 61, 94) use of phrases such as “in our free America” and “in our broad America,” or Post’s (1922:xxviii) statement that, “At a time when the whole world looks to America for leadership, our country is still youth personified,” with the word ‘our’ implying that the reader is similarly an American. This connection between middle class gender norms and an American identity highlight the importance of understanding material culture from an intersectional perspective, where additional implications of the adoption of items such as faux gemstones can help to potentially illuminate women’s ideas about other aspects of their identity as well.

### *Cosmetics and “Paints” (Makeup)*

Cosmetics, like clothing, featured a dramatic shift in consumption practices at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; however, unlike clothing, cosmetics went from being seen as a form of sinfulness and deceit to a method for extracting inner beauty. Although identifiable cosmetic containers were found in very low numbers at the houses in Pardeesville and

Eckley, this low incidence is likely due to the fact that many types of cosmetics were dispensed in common jars and bottles, making them difficult to identify when labels deteriorate over time.

Although cosmetics, which are defined as creams and lotions meant to protect or correct the skin, had less of a negative social connotation than paints and enamels, which were intended to mask the skin and provide a different color, both were unwelcome in early American society following the Revolutionary War (Peiss 2011:10, 23).

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was believed that a person's appearance was a reflection of their inner self, and so the application of products, whether commercially procured or home produced according to closely guarded recipes, represented a deceitful act and served as a warning on the virtue of the person. In addition to being dangerous, products intended to change one's appearance were "associated with social climbers and urban sophisticates concerned more with make a good appearance than with living a virtuous life" (1998:22); indeed, applying cosmetics was viewed in some circles as defying God's will. With the establishment of the American Republic and its new emphasis on a virtuous citizenry, the populous (and especially men) began to take these warnings more seriously and shun such products. That said, women still had a difficult time attaining the ideal appearance – said to be a sign of a woman's true virtue. This expectation included "fair and white skin, blushing cheeks, ruby lips, expressive eyes, and a 'bloom' of youth" (Peiss 2011:24). Placed in an unenviable position, women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century chose to continue their use of cosmetics in secret.

At least some of this emphasis and obsession with skin's appearance rested in rising racism and the association of dark skin with ugliness and inferiority. As

missionaries and anthropologists spread across the globe, America's obsession with skin color devolved into an aesthetic beauty contest in which white Westerners declared "the superiority of white racial beauty" (Peiss 2011:31). This judgement wasn't just reserved for people of African descent – Irish, Jewish, and German immigrants were likewise denigrated as being inferior to Anglo-Saxons due to their complexions. As society developed a gradient of skin color as a measure of virtue, women became more invested in lightening the hue of their skin. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, skin whitening products would remain the most sold type of cosmetic (Peiss 2011). In the anthracite region, reporters from popular magazines often commented on the 'ruddy' or 'dark' complexions of the workers they encountered, further stigmatizing these groups and serving to differentiate them from 'proper' Americans (see Hambidge 1898).

The status of cosmetics changed dramatically with the arrival of mass manufacturing and, most crucially, professional advertising. Advertisers were able to reverse the Victorian Era notion that cosmetics *hid* a person's true virtue by arguing that women had a moral obligation *to* beautify themselves in ways that "honored God's handiwork and nature's laws" (Peiss 2011:86). This shift started in the 1890s but gained traction especially in the 1910s and 1920s. Once cosmetics were made respectable through this advertiser-driven shift in cultural perspective, class and status hierarchies entered the cosmetic markets in a major way.<sup>34</sup> Cosmetics businesswomen such as Elizabeth Arden and Helena Rubinstein targeted their products at "fashionable, wealthy white women," which effectively established a hierarchy of cosmetic status based on distinctions of consumption. Purchasing Arden's and Rubinstein's products allowed

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<sup>34</sup> This shift in the cultural status of cosmetics also occurred on a parallel but separate track for African American women. For a deeper discussion, see Mullins 1999.

women from all social classes to emulate and, through patterns of consumption, join the upper classes. These brands promulgated this upper-class identity by focusing on the exclusivity of their product lines: the brand was advertised only in high status women's magazines such as *Vogue*, only high-end department stores were permitted to sell their products, and in many instances selling rights were only granted to one store within a town (Peiss 2011). This manufactured scarcity helped make the products appear more exclusive and, therefore, have higher prestige and higher status. Therefore, both the purchasing of cosmetics, which served as a signaling of status, as well as the use of cosmetics, which helped women demonstrate their virtue according to the notion that inner beauty is reflected as outer beauty, served as performances of identity that were uniquely gendered but also intersecting with ethnic and class statuses.

Few artifacts related to cosmetics or makeup were recovered from the excavations in Eckley or the excavations at 227 Lower Street, although 221 Lower Street, where the stockings were recovered, had an abundance of cosmetic jars. The cosmetics assemblage recovered from 221 Lower Street include two Chesebrough (Vaseline) jars dated between 1945-1955, three Chesebrough-Pond's (Vaseline) jars dated to post-1955, three Mazon containers, and three Avon containers. Vaseline was used for a variety of cosmetic purposes, including as skin moisturizer, as a hair pomade, as well as a medical treatment. Mazon was marketed solely as a 'cure' for skin conditions, including for ring worm, psoriasis, eczema, and poison ivy. No other cosmetic containers were identified. One lipstick tube was recovered from #34 Back Street, and one brown eyebrow pencil was recovered from #38 Back Street. The low number of artifacts could be an indication that women were not using makeup and cosmetics in the manners or to the extent that women

were expected to by cultural standards in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The low representation of these products could indicate that women instead chose to follow the religious perspective that encouraged women not to wear makeup (in an intersection between gender and ethnic identities) or that women found makeup and cosmetics unnecessary expenditures on tight budgets (in an intersection between gender and class identities). Either way, the lack of makeup provides insight into the ways that women chose to perform the role of 'woman' through selective presentations of their appearances.

### *Matrons Conclusion*

Although not typically thought of as a type of social performance, the way that women in the anthracite region regulated their appearance was ultimately part of a larger movement to establish their identity relative to their community. Through the adornment of certain styles of clothes, jewelry, makeup, and cosmetics, women were able to negotiate who they were and how society viewed them. While most visibly markers of gender identity, these practices also had underlying class and ethnic identity implications. While the other forms of gender performance discussed in the chapter focus on actions that women in the anthracite did or did not take as a form of identity performance, clothing and cosmetics represent forms of identity performance that were on-going: the purchase, application, and wearing of these products served as a repeated dedication to the identities that they represented. Although both clothing and cosmetics are frequently obscured in the archaeological record due to preservation biases, the presence of nylons and three cosmetics containers from workers' houses in Eckley and Pardeesville has helped illuminate some of the identity consumption patterns of women in the anthracite region.

### Conclusion

Women in the anthracite region performed a wide variety of social roles in their quest to embody a select set of identities. From enacting (or choosing not to enact) the socially prescribed approaches to mothering, including the enculturation of children in their future gender roles, to the medicalization of women's bodies, to the performance of domestic tasks (including for pay), to the selection, purchase, and wearing of specific items to modify their appearance, women's lives were largely full of performances that served to reify their statuses as women. These performances were conscious, repetitive choices made over an extended period with the ultimate goal of securing women's reputations to themselves as well as to their larger community about their belonging to specific social groups. The selective purchasing of material culture allowed women to own the props they needed to carry out these performances. In these instances, the material cultures serves as a representation of women's choice to pursue and adopt the cultural identity associated with those objects.

In the anthracite region, women's performances of motherhood largely obeyed the middle class social dictates of what a 'mother' should be. Women stayed in the home with their children and raised them according to religious principles. While African American mothers were castigated by white middle class American society in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century for leaving their young children in the care of relatives in order for the mothers to work outside the home, the migrant mothers in Northeastern Pennsylvania were able to avoid societal scorn by fulfilling society's expectations. However, the economic circumstances of these working families meant that women's

fulfillment of their middle class social role to not work for wages outside the home oftentimes necessitated the supplementation of the household income through children's wages. This delicate balance of motherhood and labor, both by women and their children, represents a unique class and gender coping strategy.

Women's performances have also highlighted the ways that gendered performances can help to reinforce different ethnic identities. The adoption of American-style clothing represented a break from traditional identities through the visual identification with a new ethnic group. At the same time, women's participation in strikes and on picket-lines was seen as uniquely foreign and distinctly un-American (see Nielsen 2001). Ultimately, anthracite women's dedication to their religious beliefs and their partition in ethnic churches ensured that their ethnic identities would remain strong. However, in many these situations, women had to make decisions between which identities to preference in a performance.

Women's class status was also communicated through their gender roles. The majority of working class women's domestic activities – canning food, laundry for both their own families and others, working in subsistence gardens, cleaning, providing for boarders – were activities that upper class and many middle class women did not have to contend with because they were able to pay domestic servants to perform those tasks. Therefore, the gendered experiences of working class women varied widely from the experiences of middle and upper class women. However, women's consumption patterns, such as of clothes, indicate that working class women continued to consume in ways that emulated higher status lifestyles.

Women's gender roles also required the perpetuation of those gender roles through the enculturation of their children. The gender differences in children's toys worked to shape children's behaviors in order to be more in line with that which would be expected of them as adults. The association of marbles with boys, which encouraged outside play, and dolls or tea sets with girls, which were delicate and needed to be played with inside, helped cement the idea of men and women's separate cultural spheres. Further, the toys that mothers provided their children with trained girls, especially, in tasks that would be expected of them as middle class women, including hosting teas and raising infants and toddlers. By ingraining behaviors related to mothering and hosting tea services, women were preparing their daughters for gendered performances that they would be expected to carry out in their everyday lives. The presence of the toy tea sets, in particular, paint an additional picture of aspirational class status. It is unclear whether women already imagined themselves as part of the growing American middle class and then were simply transferring this identity on to their daughters, or whether they recognized their place within the economic and social hierarchy of company town life and instead sought to prepare their daughters with the cultural knowledge they would need if they succeeded in escaping that status. Women's decisions on child labor as part of their performance of their own gender roles also helped to re-enforce children's gender roles. Sending children to work – particularly that boys sent to breakers were seen as starting a career in coal mining, while girls sent to textile mills were seen as gaining skills that would help them in run their households when they inevitably got married and quit wage labor entirely – reveals that even from a young age, the culturally-dictated ideal career goals of men versus women were



In total, women's multiple roles in company town life reflected not only their status as women, but also as migrants starting new lives in America as well as members of the working class. This intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity shaped women's lives in different ways as women attempted to weave their own identities within corporate landscapes of physical and social control.

## Chapter 4. The Domestic(ated) Gender: Women's Roles in Household Identities

“The motive that lies at the root of ownership is emulation” -Veblen

### Introduction

On a crisp April morning in 1935, a seven-foot long rock fell from the roof of a Jeddo-Highland Coal Company mine at Eckley, killing coal miner Joseph Falatko, Sr., instantly. Within hours of the accident, Annie Falatko answered a knock at her door at 40 Back Street to find her brother-in-law, hat in hand, waiting to deliver the news. “Annie, it’s all over,” is all he is reported to have said. In many ways, he was right: in the course of a single day, Annie Falatko found herself a widow, with four children under the age of 12 to raise, suddenly without a regular income, and living in a home at the whim of the company who now knew Annie had no way to pay rent. Interviews with Annie and Joseph’s sons eighty years after the accident reveal that many things changed within the household in the weeks and months following the incident, but other aspects of the children’s home life remained oddly unaffected: the surviving members of the family remained in their home and eventually even moved into a similar house in town located closer to their school; Annie took on a night position within the company, thereby ensuring she could continue to care for her young children and maintain her household during the hours her children were home and awake; and the children continued to attend school. Annie Falatko’s perseverance is not only a testament to the woman herself, but also to the peculiar social circumstances that defined working class women’s lives during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Annie and thousands of women in the anthracite region just like her had been trained to manage their house and raise their families despite

the constant uncertainty that their gender and class afforded them; whereas society expected women to wilt when disaster struck, they adapted instead – while maintaining their identity-based roles and responsibilities.

This chapter illuminates the dual roles of women within their homes as both guardians of the home from the spiritually-profane within society as well as social climbers responsible for the class status of the family. Analyzing the material remains related to household identity signaling (most prominently class status, but also those related to religiosity and femininity) provides insights into the lives and social strategies of working families and women who managed their households. This chapter uses an exploration of the material aspects of working class life to analyze the methods that women used to decorate their homes and demonstrate their ability (or inability) to abide by the standards set forth for appropriate gender and class identities, which were in turn both heavily influenced by the cult of domesticity. Embodying these standards provided women with a level of propriety within society that could then be used to negotiate greater power within the broader structure of social relations.

This chapter begins with a discussion of historic domestic gender roles with a special focus on the Cult of Domesticity and class status concerns within the home, followed by how these identity-based responsibilities were modified for the company town context. I will then discuss how gender identity within the confines of the company town structure is further complexified by an analysis that takes into account gender's intersections with other aspects of identity. I will then explore the materiality of household identity and interpret its relationship to larger contemporary societal trends

within gender and class identity performance through an analysis of ceramic vessels, household decorative items, and religious decorations.

### *The Cult of Domesticity in the Household*

In 17<sup>th</sup> century America, the house was ruled by the father. Women could temporarily stand in for their husbands, but legally, the father was responsible for all activities that occurred within the home. The home was the primary unit of production as families farmed, raised animals, and self-produced the items they needed for survival (Hawes and Nybakken 2001: 4). Socialization, vocational training, education, and maintaining order all took place within the home, and land served as the primary means of transferring power and wealth. However, as technological changes took hold and mass manufacturing in the form of the factory and the market gained marketshare, independent producers were increasingly priced out of competition. These technological changes ushered in social changes as men, with little recourse other than to join the new manufacturing workforce, retained their legal control of the household but lost much of their social control over it. Women as well as institutions such as public schools took over responsibilities previously reserved for the male head of household. It was within this period of social influx that women's role within the household expanded from simply working at home and being subservient to her husband's dictates to organizing and running the household while obeying the instructions of her absent-at-work husband (Hawes and Nybakken 2001; Coontz 1988). This shift led to the popular idea of 'separate sphere': women were responsible for the private, domestic sphere while men were visible in the public sphere as the family's breadwinning wage. With domestic production no

longer a key concern in middle class households, women's responsibilities shifted yet again, this time to maintaining the morality of the household and the proper upbringing of the children (Hawes and Nybakken 2001: 6).

Also called the ideology of domesticity, the cult of domesticity arose in the aftermath of American Protestantism's Second Great Awakening, which took place between 1800 and 1830. A reaction against Orthodox Calvinism's predestination and human depravity doctrines, the Second Great Awakening argued that humans were born moral and good but were at risk for corruption in a wicked world (Fitts 2001:116). From this newfound religious perspective, children gained new importance and cultural significance as they were now determined to be innocents in need of protection from society's vulgarities that sought to lead them astray. Protestant mothers, therefore, became tasked with protecting their offspring from the corruption of the world and instilling in them Protestant values that would lead to their salvation (Beecher and Stowe 1869:219; Halttunen 1982). Although the home-place and the workplace had already begun to diverge, this shift in cultural perspective further drove the separation and encouraged the isolation of the home from the burdens of the outside world. Middle class women, then, were granted "nearly complete control of child rearing and domestic duties" and became responsible for guarding the house from the influences outside its walls (Fitts 2001:116; Clark 1986; Wall 1994). Their performance of the cult of domesticity was not limited to raising children and maintaining a household, however, as the presentation of the household itself and its status-laden appointments were also coded according to the cult's standards.

Cultural conceptions of the home transformed shortly after the introduction of the cult of domesticity. The cult of domesticity, bolstered by religious teachings, sought to reshape women's gender performance in two primary ways: to cement their positions as transmitters and enforcers of religious doctrine to the next generation, and to hold them responsible as the maintainers of proper Christian homes. Whether one's home was deemed 'Christian' or not was largely judged by a series of symbolic motifs that one could employ to demonstrate their religiosity; of course, knowledge of these symbols and their appropriate use was a form of knowing only available to those within the cult of domesticity circle.

Although women were expected to remain in the home and to serve as domestic guardians for their children and defenders of the peaceful haven of the home, women who obeyed the cult of domesticity were tasked with work that could be as arduous and back-breaking as their husband's. Although the home was perceived of as a separate sphere "distinct from the increasingly exploitative 'work place'," women's unpaid, unacknowledged work *inside* the home rarely ceased:

Wives cooked, cleaned, laundered, nursed sick family members, took care of their children, and performed a host of other labors... Only among the very wealthiest families were husbands' incomes large enough to purchase everything a family needed to survive. In the poorest families, wives scavenged... for abandon or unguarded food, fuel, and clothing. Even in middling families, a wife's labor in keeping a garden, making clothes, economizing with food, and even producing some of the family's furnishings and equipment (like soap) enabled her household to maintain a comfortable standard of living. [Boydston 1999: p.3]

Women's work was truly never finished, especially for those families that found themselves without the financial ability to sustain the at home lifestyle that the cult of domesticity demanded. For these women, this litany of at-home responsibilities were only further added to by the need to engage in additional income-generating activities.

This inequality amongst women who prescribed to the cult of domesticity in their ability to carry out the tenants of the ideology were ultimately based in class differences, although these class differences had major implications for other elements of identity, specifically gender and religious identities.

Although the cult of domesticity had been largely accepted by American culture as an appropriate standard for all American women, many barriers to access remained. Chief amongst the barriers to obeying the tenants of the ideology was the requirement that women remain in the house and not work in order that she might care for her child and her house full-time and without distractions. For many working class households, dual incomes (at the very least – children were also sent to work to provide additional incomes) were required to keep the family from becoming homeless. Although unions fought for men's ability to earn a 'breadwinning' wage, the term used to describe the wage at which a man could afford to feed his family, working class women and children were both often sidelined into participating in the informal economy.<sup>35</sup> In the anthracite region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, jobs performing manual labor on farms during harvest periods, providing room and board for mine workers, picking wild berries, doing laundry, and potentially performing given-out textile manufacturing work were all aspects of the informal economy in which women participated. Because many of these could be completed at home or with minimal time away from the home, they represent ways in which women maintained their socially-dictated, aspirationally middle class responsibilities within the home while also balancing the family's economic realities.

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<sup>35</sup> Unions also fought to keep women out of the workforce due to the fear that women's entrance to industry would decrease wages for all workers and were actively hostile towards women's unions (Kessler-Harris 1982).

Other barriers to achieving the cult of domesticity standards were similarly class or ethnicity based. Being unable to abide by these tenants opened women (and their families) up to social prejudice and exclusion from being categorized as ‘true women’ (Welter 1966). Members of the middle class, in particular, argued that respectability led to prosperity; thus, poverty was a moral failure by the individual rather than a symptom of the institutions that the middle class themselves benefitted from (Bushman 1992:424; Fitts 2001:116).

The cult of domesticity maintained a strong political presence in the American consciousness into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, although foundational beliefs began to be chipped away as a new generation of women began to interpret their responsibilities under the cult of domesticity in a new light. Employers continued to exclude married women from gainful employment or paid women less when they did employ them, a disparity they justified and even legislated by arguing that women’s primary function was to maintain her family, with wage work being a secondary and less important aspect of her identity (Baron 1981). These efforts ultimately sought to keep women in the home in order to maintain the structure of the middle-class American family through the 19<sup>th</sup> and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Gordon 1973). Meanwhile, middle-class women reformers began to re-interpret their duties under the cult of domesticity. Reaching beyond the limits of their own domiciles, these women reached into the domiciles of working-class women and began a concerted effort to introduce the tenants and virtues of American culture (just as they had been required to do for their children) to this new group of people through the introduction of settlement houses. Seeing themselves now as the



guardians of all innocents, these reformers also began advocating for a multitude of social welfare programs at the local, state, and federal levels (Muncy 1998).

### *Domesticity as Godliness*

Because the cult of domesticity arose largely due to the resounding social influences of a set of shifting religious convictions, it is unsurprisingly that the ideology maintained strong religious undertones for the entirety of its existence. Children served as the bridge between religion and the home, and women quickly became responsible for the religiosity of the entire family – not just that of her children. The Cult of True Womanhood, as the cult of domesticity was contemporaneously referred to as, relied heavily on women's subscription to four primary virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity (Welter 1966:152). Women in particular were identified as having a “peculiar susceptibility” to religious teachings, as “piety was the core of woman's virtue, the source of her strength” (1966:152). Women who obeyed these four tenants were promised happiness and power, while those who did not were actively avoided, derided, and persecuted by an unyielding public.

It is also important to point out here that, although the cult of domesticity had specifically Anglo-Protestant roots, Catholic migrant were held to these same standards. By the mid-19th century, the cult of domesticity had expanded from a religious pronouncement and gained cache in the American cultural mainstream. Although the religious undertones and religious judgements were still a very fundamental part of the ideology, the standards were applied to all American women, regardless of their individual circumstances. In the same way that being working class was not an excuse for

not adopting the middle class lifestyle the cult of domesticity required, Catholicism was not an appropriate excuse for not adopting the Protestant-derived standards of the ideology. Because the cult of domesticity became conflated with mainstream American women's culture in general, refusing to adopt the cult of domesticity was akin to rejecting an identity as an American woman – a status that would have had a unique and special meaning for immigrant women and their families.

However, just because Protestant and Catholic women were expected to abide by the same domestic standards of gender performance did not mean that the two groups saw eye-to-eye: Protestants and Roman Catholics fought throughout the second half of the 19th century about who had the more pious version of womanhood. Although each portrayed the other as “being anti-family and anti-female,” both groups “presented in their religious publications an idealized portrait of Christian womanhood that was fundamentally the same... [and] both subscribed to the middle class 19th century phenomenon of the ‘cult of domesticity’” (Brozyna 1997:505-506). Both Protestants and Catholics alike denote the home and the church as the centers of female piety while “not call[ing] into question the domestic ideology that designated the duties of Christian women as being first and foremost that of service and sacrifice for those in their home circle” (1997:507). Here we see that, although Protestantism and Catholicism are fundamentally opposed on a number of topics and even accuse the other of being anti-family (this critique is primarily centered from treatments of the biblical Mary), both religions adopted and advocated for the cult of domesticity in equal measure and with equal fervor, even though the ideology was rooted in Protestantism's re-imagination.

Etiquette guides and social reformers alike expounded on the natural and ‘divine’ responsibilities of women as being centered squarely within the home, with proclamations such as, “Woman may be well assured that the surest pathway to the highest happiness and honor lies through the peaceful domain of wifedom and motherhood...To the true woman home is her throne,” abundant throughout (De la Banta 1878: 288; Hartley 1872; Burnap 1848; Beecher and Stowe 1979 [1869]). As guardian of the home, women also became responsible for the conduct of everyone in the family and could be cited as the cause for her husband’s moral or social failings (De La Banta 1878: 288). Although some had noted that this situation was the result of traditions rather than innate characteristics, women were still expected to aspire to these standards (Coolidge 1912: v).

The cult of domesticity also made clear that religion was the only appropriate activity for which women could take part in outside the home (Coolidge 1912: 39; Welter 1966). Because the ideology relied deeply on maintaining values that required women to be separated from society writ large (piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity) as part of its definition of acceptable femininity, heavily cordoning women from participating in endeavors outside the home was necessary for the preservation of the cult of domesticity. Welter notes that “unlike participation in other societies or movements, church work would not make her less domestic or submissive, less a True Woman” (1966:154). Some scholars suggest that the everyday women’s suddenly expanded role within the religious life of the family was a diversion that served to disguise the perpetuation of gender inequality through the class enforced segregation of women into continued domesticity despite a variety of new social opportunities (Jackson 2016:226).

Popular publications from the turn of the century emphasized the idea that this separation as being beneficial and even becoming for women, with statements such as “woman never looks lovelier than in her reverence for religion” intended to encourage women to pursue pious identities and pursuits (Daniels 1840:111; Welter 1966). However, women who “suffer[ed] her intellectual pursuits to clash with her domestic duties” were subsequently castigated in the press as both men and women remarked on “female irreligion [as being] the most revolting feature in human character” (Daniels 1840:111; Welter 1966). With these standards and recommendations, the stakes for women who did not follow the social prescriptions of the cult of domesticity, whether by choice or not, were high.

### *Materiality and the Cult of Domesticity*

As guardians of homes, women were also expected to furnish their homes in ways that best reflected their status as proper mothers and appropriate household managers. The arrival of the cult of domesticity had spurred the transformation of the home into a means of transmitting statements on the occupant’s class and religious sentiments through the utilization of symbolic representations. Fitts notes that “architectural symbols of a respectable ‘Christian’ home included gothic designs, plants, natural motifs, and the general orderliness of the house and the landscape” (2001:116; Green 1983; Clark 1986). The presence of these symbols was intended to influence the behaviors of those who lived in the home as well as to communicate to visitors of the home about the residents’ identities as proper middle class American Christians. Women exclusively were judged by the character of their home according to these principals, thereby increasing the

pressure on them to decorate in ways that aligned with the cult of domesticity's teachings. Additionally, because the central theme of the Second Great Awakening was that people were themselves responsible for their celestial destination and their own actions dictated whether they were worthy of salvation (rather than predestination, which established these events as out of the control of individuals), pressure on women to conform to these household regulations intensified. "Respectability was not based on birth or wealth but could be learned by anyone who accepted the ideology of domesticity and exhibited appropriate behavior," was the popular conception of the time, meaning that real barriers to entry, such as lack of funds, ignorance of the cult of domesticity's expectations, or unavailability of 'appropriate' home furnishings, were not acceptable excuses for women's failing to meet society's expectations for religiosity in the home (Fitts 2001:116).

The "pivotal moral impact of apparently mundane goods" stretched beyond the confines of the cult of domesticity, however, as a society built on religious restraint embraced the Victorian Age and its abundance of consumer options (Mullins 2001:158). Social thinkers began to draw direct connections between possessions and their possessor; material goods were the means by which virtue (or, on the other hand, degenerates) could be assessed and measured. Consumer choices suddenly had both symbolic and tangible real-world impacts for their owners as society sought to square "the spiritual tolls of material acquisitiveness [with] secular desire" (Mullins 2001:158). Subsequently, the items that aspirationally-genteel women chose to incorporate into their homes became careful and studied choices in the public performance of religiosity and domesticity. What Mullins (2001) refers to as 'bric-a-brac' – the vases, figurines, statues

and other ornamental objects that were affordable enough to be acquired by the domestic-minded homemaker – served as the signals of gentility within the home. Of course, the version of gentility that the display of bric-a-brac promoted was one that was socially coded (along with the rest of 19th century moralism) along implicit lines of ‘white’ middle class identity (Mullins 2001:158). By implementing these social norms, one also helped to identify themselves as belonging to these identity standards.

Luckily for women tasked with decorating their households, the explosion in consumer goods manufacturing that started at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century flooded the market with new, cheap options for home decorations and furnishings. The period immediately following World War I, with its abundance of cheap, attainable decorations and architectural finishes, had significant consequences for the workers’ houses at Eckley. The items recommended by the cult of domesticity for decorating one’s house, including gothic-style designs, plants, and natural designs, became significantly more affordable and available to the working classes. The ability of workers to finally afford the luxuries and adornments that home manuals (which promoted the tenants of the cult of domesticity) had been promoting for years, such as cheaply replaceable wallpapers, curtains, and so on, made these changes possible. Yet the interwar period also marked a shift in the way that people thought about their homes and, by extension, themselves. Together, these influences set the stage for a model of home-ownership, and American life in general, that more closely resembles society today.

### *The Cult of Domesticity and Intersectional Identities*

The cult of domesticity was a uniquely middle class white American ideology, and conflicts often arose for those who aspired to perform a feminine identity as defined by the cult of domesticity only to find that fundamental aspects of their own identity were at odds with what was expected. Class was a major barrier for women. The ability to properly perform the central tenants of the concept required women to remain in the house – effectively foregoing the possibility of a secondary household income, which was often necessary for working class families. The desire to emulate a middle class lifestyle forced many working class women to shift their life plans in order to accommodate their aspirational class status, such as through waiting to marry until their future husbands made enough money to support them (Matthaei 1998). In other ways, such as the example of ceramics that I will discuss in detail later, patterns of material consumption were used to bolster claims to a middle class even in the face of evidence that indicated the family was actually working class.

Domesticity became a signifier of wealth. Women whose husbands earned enough money to hire domestic servants were able to demonstrate their domesticity through the supervision and management of their servants and nannies. These middle and upper class women, then, also had the time and resources to extend their domesticity into the public sphere, where they were able to become involved with “‘social homemaking’ for the needy” (Matthaei 1998:264). Women without that degree of financial support who were unable to hire domestic servants instead found themselves tasked with ‘homemaking,’ an endeavor that “involved a good deal of arduous physical work, such as carting water and scrubbing clothing, as well as efforts to ‘make ends meet’ by bargain

shopping, scavenging, taking in boarders, or doing odd jobs in their homes” (Matthaei 1998). For these women, twelve- or fourteen-hour days of housework were followed by the nightly tending of children. One social scientist from the early 20th century found that although manufacturing had largely been removed from the home by that time, little about housework changed other than to make house work “less and less educative” (Coolidge 1912: 71).

The cult of domesticity also reinforced specifically white, middle class American identities as those most preferable in society. The requirement that married women stay in the home followed a pattern of ethnic and racial division that favored white women’s cultural tendencies. In 1920, “only 6.5% of married European American women were gainfully employed... [whereas] 18.5 percent of married Asian American women and 32.5 percent of married African American women were so employed,” revealing the ethnic breakdowns that enabled white women to more easily adopt roles that conformed to the standards of the cult of domesticity when compared to women from other racial and ethnic backgrounds (Matthaei 1998:264). For immigrant families from Europe, their ability to assimilate into white mainstream American culture offered them a social advantage.

Although the cult of domesticity on its surface focused largely on women’s identity and defining femininity, in practice the ideology intimately affected wide ranging and various other aspects of identity, including defining masculinity, proper class status behaviors and lifeways, and what constituted being an ‘American’.



### *Gender as a Means of Control*

The cult of domesticity had high economic costs for women that ultimately benefitted capitalism and capitalist institutions more than individuals or families. The ideal division of labor within a marriage according to the cult of domesticity was the combination of a breadwinning husband and a homemaking wife; this arrangement meant that women were entirely financially dependant on their husbands for survival. This arrangement benefitted the individuals that operated the company towns and the companies that owned them in two interrelated ways: by naturalizing patriarchy-derived gendered roles that could then be used to control women, and by subsequently using women's gender roles to control male workers.

Mercier and Gier (2006:996) have observed that, in a historical and global perspective, gender exclusions within the mining industry as a whole emerged at particular historical moments and were reinforced through elaborate sets of beliefs, traditions, and 'rational' justifications, and legislation. In the North American context, domestic ideology was the primary rationale and moral justification for barring women from employment at the mines. In turn, women in mining communities were constantly distressed by the realities of their own economic powerlessness and the substantial dangers associated with losing their primary breadwinner (2006:998). Kept at home, women instead had to bear the brunt of a variety of other dangers, including domestic violence and death from childbirth, with little to no recourse. However, the production of 'respectable' working families helped to maintain a docile workforce that could be reproduced for future generations of workers – thereby succeeding in the ultimate goal of preventing class conflict and economic strife (Blomberg 2006). The cult of domesticity

and domestic ideology, then, was more than a ploy to encourage a traditional middle class familial lifestyle: it was part of a much larger effort to circumscribe the options and choices of women.

With women confined within home, the image of mining as a “combative work culture based on an exaggerated masculinity” flourished. Ideas of masculinity were used to justify men’s positions of privilege within the family and the labor force. As workers embraced these masculine ideals and accepted women’s position as “‘naturally’ tied to the domestic world of reproduction,” men simultaneously yoked themselves to the concept of a male breadwinner – an economic impossibility in more mining situations, but a powerful cultural force over both men and women’s ideas of self (Mercier and Gier 2007:997). By engendering men’s work as an extension of their masculinity and women’s work as only marginal to men’s, cultural domestic ideologies succeeded at maintaining control over the labor supply (2007:997).

Capitalists were able to take advantage of this situation (and further perpetuate it) by trapping families economically in their living situations. Coal mine owners used the confluence of civic institutions such as marriage and social expectations such as the cult of domesticity to their advantage by providing benefits for married men (such as the ability to rent company houses) which encouraged their workers to marry, which created further economic and social responsibilities that reduced labor turnover and unrest. Men became unable to risk strikes or other negotiations with employers because their family’s survival depends on their income. Social reformers in the anthracite region at the turn of the 20th century commented on the low wages that mine laborers received in contrast to everything they were expected to pay for: “The adult laborer’s share does not, on an

average, amount to \$500 a year. From this sum the necessities of life must be procured, a family raised, and whatever comforts and enjoyments mine employees have these must also come from the same source” (Roberts 1904:15). The situation was just as fraught for women: loss of husband (either through death or desertion) was “economically disastrous” (Matthaei 1998:265). Because ideologies such as the cult of domesticity portrayed women as domestic and fragile with their primary and natural responsibilities inside the home, women were systematically not seen as wage earners; therefore, when women did leave the home to earn wages, such as in textile mills, they were routinely paid less than their male counterparts. A common perspective at the time was that working women were “either adolescents or ‘spinsters’” and therefore not needing or deserving of a living wage (1998:265). Unfortunately, this perception limited women’s options and established a cycle that encouraged women to stay in the home, which reinforced the gendered pay gap.

### *Managing Class Status from the Home*

The Cult of Domesticity placed the status of the household squarely within the responsibilities of the woman who ran it. Charged with properly adorning and representing her home based on the qualities deemed appropriate by the cult of domesticity, women were responsible for maintaining a multitude of societal symbols that determined everything from her fitness as a mother and status as a woman to, by association, her class status and identity as ‘American’. Women achieved this through the careful management of the household, including the ownership and display of material

culture that reinforced the types of identity that the woman deemed necessary and appropriate.

Here, I will use the example of ceramic dish assemblages, home decorations, and displays of religiosity within the home to illustrate the materiality of performing women's gendered social role within the confines of the company town.

### Ceramics

“Pottery displays the values by which human life is shaped. It brings the old and the new, the practical and the aesthetic, the personal and the collective, the social and the economic, and mundane and the spiritual, into presence and connection” (Glassie 1999: 222)

Part of a woman's duties under the cult of domesticity would have pertained to her ability to demonstrate and maintain her family's class status. Because respectability and morality were believed to be directly linked to one's prosperity, fulfilling the material expectations of a middle class household in all aspects of domestic life would have been a necessity to prove both a family's piety as well as a woman's status as a 'true woman' (Welter 1966; Bushman 1992).

Ceramics are among the most commonly analyzed artifact type due to their ubiquity and tendency to preserve long enough to enter the archaeological record. Ceramics are especially useful for providing insight into the domestic choices made by families, as the majority of American households would have owned some ceramic vessels by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when decreases in production and shipping costs made the items more available and affordable (Spencer-Wood 1987). Additionally, ceramics provide an excellent medium for interdisciplinary insights and interpretations (Majewski and Shiffer 2001). Ceramics have become the standard for exploring conceptions of class

in the past and archaeologically because, “the underlying premise concerning status and ceramics in that affluent households expressed status through consumer goods such as expensive table services” (Groover 2002:107). Analyses focused on class differences in the past drew heavily from ceramic analyses that measured vessel forms and paste types to discuss purchasing power and, by extension, socio-economic wealth and class standing (Miller 1980, 1991; Shepard 1987). Although these original methods have been heavily critiqued over the last two decades, ceramics and ceramic analyses remain a cornerstone of interpretation within the field (Hull 2007; Groover 2002). Ceramic analyses have been critiqued for focusing on an aspect of material culture that represents a relatively small part of the household budget (especially when compared to costs associated with rent or food purchases) (Spencer-Wood 1987). Other critiques of ceramic analyses have focused on access to ceramic markets as a limited factor in the ownership of higher priced ceramics (Baughner and Venables 1987); however, others have found that socio-economic status was routinely more of a limiting factor than market access was with regards to the ownership of different kinds of ceramic vessels (Spencer-Wood and Heberling 1987:82). Although the potential for economic bias exists, ceramics continue to hold an inordinate amount of information about daily life, as well we remain a gold standard in archaeological research, and so will be discussed here in the context of understanding class as well as ethnic and gendered identities.

Ceramic analyses within historical archaeology related to class identity are based on notions set forth by Pierre Bourdieu in his work Distinction. In this work, Bourdieu demonstrates how class-cultivated ‘taste’ in certain material goods corresponds to the creation and maintenance of larger social power structures within society (Bourdieu

1984; Wall 1991:69). Taste is developed within a social group based on the cultural knowledge possessed by that group. In concert with Foucault's understanding of knowledge as underlying society's power structures, these differing levels of knowledge serve as the foundations for society's class groups. Further, a class' associated knowledge becomes integrated into their habitus to the degree that choices and decisions about the aesthetics of material goods become innate and unquestioned. The aesthetics of material goods are "the visual representations of the choices the result from the social knowledge of taste" (Deeley 2015:7). Because social knowledge varies by class, the corresponding choices individuals make when choosing material culture becomes an outward representation of their class affiliation.

Ceramic analyses have long relied on various types of counts of ceramic data to extrapolate larger trends and practices in society. These methods, ranging from a comparison of Minimum Number of Vessel (MNV) quantities to comparisons of decorative methods on vessels to comparisons of percentages of flatwares and hollowwares, aim to "provide insights into lifeways within social and economic strata... [and] house residents' participation in the cultural system of socioeconomic stratification" (Spencer-Wood 1987:3; Hull 2007; cf. Shephard 1987, Kenyon 1982). Work by historical archaeologists on ceramics from the 1980s largely follows these trends of identifying patterns across sets of data in order to delineate and demarcate the limits of certain economic, social, or ethnic groups and to identify who belonged, and who did not belong, to which groups (Hull 2007). Research on the correlation between wealth and 'luxury' items, in particular, exploded after Miller's ground breaking publication on the cost (and, later, sale price) of 19<sup>th</sup> century refined earthenware ceramic

vessels (1980, 1991a, 2000). However, this method of directly correlating ceramic vessel cost to social class status was quickly and soundly critiqued for scholars' tendency to "treat material culture as passive indicators of wealth," complete with fixed social meanings and unchanging classifications (Wurst and Fitts 1999:2). Others highlighted the inherent problems associated with curation and reuse of vessels, and questioned how applicable ceramic price indexes could be in instances where a vessel's use-life spanned decades (to the point that the attributes that had previously made the vessel a valuable status item now detracted from its value) (Cook et al. 1996). Since the 1990s, more research has been devoted to understanding the social processes behind the patterns observed in research conducted during the 1980s. Recognizing that social groups are not monolithic in their intentions, demographics, or goals, greater emphasis has been placed on understanding inter-group variation and the motivations behind acts of consumptions. My work here follows the shift in emphasis undertaken in the 1990s by drawing heavily on ceramic data acquired through archaeological excavations at workers' houses, but focuses on the potential social intentions behind the purchasing of certain vessels rather than the supposed social connotations of those items.

More recently, ceramic analysis has grown as a method for illuminating gender in the historical record. The household became the social, philosophical, and economic realm of women within the household during the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as the Cult of Domesticity grew in influence and the social constraints on society's newly emerged middle class women became more pronounced. As keepers of the household, women used material culture as a method for exerting their influence through the selection and procurement of specific consumer goods (Wall 1991: 70). However, ceramic analyses

have been repeatedly criticized for their lack of intersectionality between aspects of class and gender (cf. Cook et al. 1996, Wurst and McGuire 1999). As part of my intersectional approach, I will use the ceramic data collected from these five houses to discuss the various implications of gendered strategies for class mobility in these contexts.

### *Household Vessel Comparison*

This section will begin with a categorization of the types of vessels recovered from the five company houses, including presenting hypotheses to explain these findings. I will begin with a discussion of the ratios of paste types recovered from each house and identified in the MNV analysis, followed by a comparison of the different vessel forms recovered, and concluding with an overview of the types of ceramic decoration identified within the refined earthenwares assemblage from each site. While this analysis is looking for potential differences between the unskilled and skilled households, it is also assessing the data for similarities and differences within the unskilled household assemblages to explore intra-group variation.

#### Vessel Paste Type Analysis.

A paste type analysis that focuses on the proportions of refined earthenwares to coarse earthenwares can reveal differential access (whether through economic, market, ethnic, or other forces) to more expensive refined vessels. Charles Orser's (2013:241) work in Ballykilcline, Ireland, has demonstrated that this type of analysis can reveal information about ethnic and national affinity. Although this type of analysis is more fruitful in 18th century contexts, when refined earthenware transportation and manufacture costs



remained high before they began to be mass produced in North America (Bloch 2011:12), the social connotations that demeaned coarse earthenwares likely followed them into the next century, especially as consumers began to raise concerns about the lead content of their ceramic wares – a common glaze additive for redwares (Bloch 2011; Comstock 1994). Coarse earthenwares, especially those made locally, were found to be “vastly inferior to imported wares” throughout the 18th century (Noel Hume 1969:98-99). As Bloch (2011:iii) notes, “over time, the proportion of coarse earthenware in ceramic assemblages decreased”; understanding the ways in which the shift took hold and manifested at different levels of society can provide information into variable, class-based material differences.

A comparison of refined earthenwares to coarse earthenwares recovered from the five house sites in the anthracite coal company towns shows that the miners’ house had markedly more refined earthenwares than three of the four houses rented by mine laborers (Table 1). The house at 38 Back St. (a mine laborer’s house) showed percentages of refined earthenwares closer to those seen at 217 Lower Street (the miner’s house). The other three mine laborers’ houses, 34, 36, and 40 Back St., all had percentages of refined earthenwares in 70-80% range, while 38 Back St. had 87% refined earthenwares, and 217 Lower St. had over 90% of its earthenware assemblage as refined types (see Table 4). While this summary reveals an interesting variation within the mine laborers’ assemblages, a closer evaluation of the paste types themselves provides additional insight into patterns of consumption taking place in working households.

Table 4. Refined vs Coarse Paste Types by House

	217 Lower St.		34 Back St. <sup>36</sup>		36 Back St.		38 Back St. <sup>37</sup>		40 Back St.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Refined Earthenware	38	90.4%	42	77.7%	45	78.9%	68	87.1%	56	72.7%
Coarse Earthenware	4	9.5%	12	22.2%	12	21.0%	10	12.8%	21	27.3%
Total Earthenware	N=42		N=54		N=57		N=78		N=77	

Although the refined vs. coarse earthenwares analysis revealed important contrasts between three of the mine laborers' houses and the remaining two domestic contexts, an evaluation of the collection of paste types identified through the MNV analyses reveals a more nuanced difference.

A breakdown of vessels by paste type reveals several key facts (Table 2). Firstly, although the refined vs. coarse earthenware analysis showed that two houses, 217 Lower and 38 Back St, had greater proportions of refined earthenwares than the other mine laborers' houses, the paste type analysis shows that only the refined earthenwares present at 217 Lower St are contemporary vessels (whitewares), while the refined earthenwares at 38 Back St. are composed of nearly 15% outdated paste types, including yellowware and pearlware. Both yellowware and pearlware would have been outdated ceramic types *before* the settlements at Eckley and Pardeesville were even built. Therefore, despite the refined vs. coarse earthenware analysis showing that these two houses had similar percentages of their earthenware assemblages as refined pieces, a deeper look reveals that the residents at 38 Back St were using shortcuts (in the form of outdated, cheaper vessels)

<sup>36</sup> There were sixteen vessels from 34/36 Back St. that cross-mended across the house boundary line (n=13) or were from unknown contexts (n=3). These represent 11.3% of identified vessels.

<sup>37</sup> There were five vessels from 38/40 Back St. that cross-mended across the house boundary line (n=4) or were from unknown contexts (n=1). These represent 3.0% of identified vessels.

in achieving the higher ratio – and higher social status – of refined earthenwares as was seen at 217 Lower St. Additionally, even in the other mine laborers’ houses, a non-zero portion of their refined earthenware vessels are types of vessels that were no longer in vogue by the time the company towns were built. Paste types like creamware declined in popularity in the first decades of the 1800s, while pearlware declined in popularity in the 1820s, yet these outdated paste types account for 4.7% of the refined earthenwares at 34 Back St., 11.1% of the refined earthenwares at 36 Back St., 13.2% of the refined earthenwares at 38 Back St., and 3.5% of the refined earthenwares at 40 Back St., while not appearing in the 217 Lower St. assemblage at all. Therefore, although some mine laborers’ houses had percentages of refined earthenwares approaching those seen in the wealthier miner’s house contexts, a closer evaluation shows that these numbers are ultimately padded with lower quality, less white, likely cheaper to acquire vessels that would have been severely outdated by the time they were utilized and discarded at Eckley.

Table 5. MNV Vessel Paste Type by House

	217 Lower St.		34 Back St.		36 Back St.		38 Back St.		40 Back St.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Creamware (late)	0		1	1.6%	4	6.3%	0		0	
Whiteware	38	63.3%	39	63.9%	38	59.4%	58	68.2%	53	62.4%
Yellowware	0		1	1.6%	2	3.1%	1	1.2%	1	1.2%
Pearlware	0		1	1.6%	1	1.6%	9	10.6%	2	2.4%
Redware	2	3.3%	8	13.1%	8	12.5%	9	10.6%	20	23.5%
Other Earthenware	1	1.7%	3	4.9%	3	4.7%	0		0	
Porcelain	15	25.0%	3	4.9%	0		4	4.7%	6	7.1%
Rockingham	1	1.7%	0		0		1	1.2%	1	1.2%
Jackfield	0		1	1.6%	1	1.6%	0		0	
Stoneware	3	5.0%	4	6.6%	7	10.9%	3	3.5%	2	2.4%
Total	N=60		N=61		N=64		N=85		N=85	

A second important observation from this comparison are the relative shares of porcelain vessels identified from each house. While the miner's house (217 Lower St) had 25% of the identified vessels as porcelain, Houses 34 and 38 had less than 5%, House 40 had slightly more than 7% of its vessels as porcelain, and House 36 had no porcelain vessels. Porcelain vessels were often used in tea or coffee services, which, although increasingly available to the working classes beginning in the mid-19th century, would still have held a middle class connotation (Venable et al. 2000). From a purely economic standpoint, however, porcelain vessels would have been among the costliest vessels one could purchase, and so the higher volumes of porcelain vessels at the miner's house (when compared to the mine laborers' houses) could be a manifestation of the intra-town class differences created by the towns' internal social structures and different 'class' identities.

The percentage of utilitarian paste types to refined paste types in each assemblage is also telling. Taking together redware and stoneware vessels (the pastes most generally associated with utilitarian vessels like crocks and bowls), an interesting pattern emerges between the households.<sup>38</sup> These utilitarian paste types comprise 8.8% of vessels identified at 217 Lower Street, but 19.7% of vessels at 34 Back Street, 23.4% of vessels at 36 Back Street, 14.1% of vessels at 38 Back Street, and 25.9% of vessels at 40 Back Street. This data again demonstrates the substantial material differences between segments within the working class: those with slightly more financial means translated that fiscal wealth into material difference between themselves and their less-wealthy neighbors. These differences demonstrate that a relatively greater proportion of vessels were being used for serving or presenting food or drink in the miner's house than in the

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<sup>38</sup> No white stonewares were identified in these assemblages.

mine laborers' houses. As the presentation and consumption of food are among the most class-based aspects of a meal, the fact that the miner's household was engaging to a greater extent with the class-prescribed methods of demonstrating class standing indicates that family's greater focus on (or perhaps greater ability to abide by) the cultural class ideologies of the day.

#### Vessel Form Analysis.

Ceramic vessel forms can communicate information about the types of food being served, which in turn can be used to deduce foodways as well as the associated costs of those foods (see 6). The most common form of vessel analysis focuses on tablewares. Bowls and hollowwares were needed to serve soups, stews, and other liquid-based foods – a type of food that was generally cheaper to produce and common among specific ethnic and culture dining habits (De Cunzo 1987; Otto 1977). Comparatively, flatwares and plates were needed to serve segmented meals, which incorporated a main dish as well as side dishes, all of which were intended to be consumed separately and therefore not combined on the serving vessel – a detail that necessitated the use of a plate (Deetz 1977; Yentsch 1990; Groover 2002). Plated meals, because they required individual servings as compared to bowled meals, which involve communal servings, were more expensive to prepare. Other vessels not associated with consuming meals, such as teawares and utilitarian wares, can similarly provide information about households' relative wealth when compared to one another (Wall 1991).

Table 6. Vessel Form by House

	217 Lower St.	34 Back St.	36 Back St.	38 Back St.	40 Back St.
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	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Plates	15	25.0%	9	14.8%	11	17.2%	23	26.7%	14	16.7%
Bowls	12	20.0%	25	41.0%	22	34.4%	32	37.2%	26	31.0%
Teawares	22	36.7%	9	14.8%	15	23.4%	12	14.0%	17	20.2%
Utilitarian	6	10.0%	12	19.7%	13	20.3%	13	15.1%	23	27.4%
Serving	5	8.3%	1	1.6%	1	1.6%	2	2.3%	0	
Unknown	0		5	8.2%	3	4.7%	4	4.7%	4	4.8%
Total	60	100%	61	100%	64	100%	86	100%	84	100%

The patterns of vessel form consumption at the five company town households show how different families adapted to the dual demands created by class conformity and economic deprivation. These differences are most visible in a comparison of rates of plates to bowls, the percentage of the assemblage dedicated to teawares, the percentage of utilitarian wares, and the percentage of serving vessels identified.

As discussed previously, the percentage of plates and bowls identified within a household can provide insight into the forms that meals were taking, which in turn indicates the cost of preparing those meals and can provide insights into the performed class status of the family as a whole. In the workers' houses assemblages, bowls outnumber plates at every house except for the miner's house. At 217 Lower Street, the miner's house, plates account for just 5% more of the assemblage than bowls; however, the discrepancy between observed rates of bowls and plates at the mine laborers' houses at 34, 36, 38, and 40 Back Street are 26.2%, 17.2%, 10.5%, and 14.3%, respectively. As an indicator of class performance, the mine laborers appear to be relying on cheaper meals for sustenance when compared to the household of a miner; while not surprising that mine laborers, who are paid less than miners, would subsequently be spending less money on food when compared to miners, this analysis reveals a way in which working families chose *not* to emulate their higher class neighbors.

Another important observation in the vessel form analysis is the percentage of the assemblages dedicated to teawares. At 217 Lower Street, teawares account for over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of identified vessels, whereas they only account for between 14.0% and 23.4% of vessels at the mine laborers' houses. Tea was a social event that required knowledge of proper tea etiquette – a type of class-based knowledge that Bourdieu identifies as a form of cultural gatekeeping. Hosting teas was also an expected middle and upper class event. The presence of a greater number of teawares at 217 Lower Street indicates that the woman in charge of the household there was concerned with maintaining the expected rituals of middle class domesticity. The lower percentage of teaware vessels identified at the mine laborers' houses on Back Street could be an indication of less time spent hosting teas, and therefore of a less strict adherence to middle class expectations.

The lower percentage of utilitarian vessels and higher percentage of serving vessels at 217 Lower Street when compared to the assemblages recovered from the Back Street houses also reveal that the household on Lower Street was more concerned with the ways that their meals and teas were presented (and thus resulting in a greater percentage of dishes devoted to those purposes) than their Back Street counterparts. The higher percentage of serving vessels identified similarly reveals a greater concern for the ways that food is being displayed and served to the family than is seen in the ceramic assemblage on Back Street. Both of these actions – more tablewares than utilitarian vessels and a larger percentage of serving vessels – support the hypothesis that the miner's family would have been living closer to a contemporary middle class lifestyle than the families of the mine laborers.

### Ceramic Decoration Analysis.

Decorated ceramics have been one of the hallmarks of historical archaeological analyses of class. Based in Bourdieu's ideas of knowledge- and wealth-based taste preferences, ceramic decoration analysis stems from the notion that certain types of ceramics have greater social status (and corresponding class connotations) than others. Individuals' purchase, use, and display of specific ceramic decorations were used to reinforce and maintain class standings. These choices often appear as patterns within the archaeological record, as cultural subgroups participate in similar consumer behaviors, although other factors, such as market access and ethnicity, can also impact the ways that these patterns manifest (Spencer-Wood 1987:1).

Different types of ceramic vessels that served different social purposes could also be used to convey different forms of identity. Wall's (1991) work with decorated tablewares and teawares reveals that women were choosing tablewares that emphasized a religious identity while simultaneously choosing teawares that did not. This pattern of religiosity aligns with the cult of domesticity's tenants that religion is centered upon the private spaces within the home and not the public sphere (taking tea would have been a greater social and public event than family dinners). The difference in decoration, in this instance, helps to promote a religious identity in line with the cult of domesticity's popular teachings in the home when compared to other circumstances (such as guests invited to tea). Separating these ceramic assemblages – the tableware vessels versus the teaware vessels – can help provide insight into the different circumstances under which certain identities can be more preferable to display.



George Miller's work with decorated ceramic price indexes (1980, 1991a, 2000) provided the field with the resources necessary to quantify the relationship between different types of consumable ceramics. After this article, economic scales could be used to discuss economics and, by extension, class relationships (Spencer-Wood 1987). However, others have recognized that money is just one part of class status, and that ceramic index scales can provide info on economic status but not class (Bograd 1991:2; Klein 1991:77). Following Bourdieu's three forms of capital, the ceramics purchased would have also required the knowledge and the behaviors associated with that material culture to truly pass as belonging to a member of the higher classes. As the higher social classes were expected to entertain guests where their more expensive, higher status material goods could be displayed, a practice known as conspicuous consumption, alongside their expected behaviors

However, I propose that families that would have been categorized as 'working class' actively sought to elevate their class status through the consumption of material goods more generally associated with the patterns of 'middle class' status. This is likely due, at least in part, to women's desire to protect their own reputations as wives and mothers against the perspectives that deemed poverty to be a moral failing within the home (Bushman 1992). As Wall states in her work on intra-class ceramic consumption differences, "Goods do not merely *reflect* various aspects of culture; rather, they *constitute* the very fabric of culture itself" (1991:69, emphasis in original). After the introduction of whiteware and the standardization of ceramic paste types beginning in the early 19th century, decoration type arose as the means for delineating status, value, and worth in ceramics. And historical archaeology has wholeheartedly embraced this

approach: “decorative elements appeal to archaeologists aesthetically, but also pragmatically, as decoration is seen as one of the most viable distinctions upon which to establish classification systems” (Bloch 2011:9). However, these analyses of decorations can easily lose sight of the larger social movements that sought to subvert the class-based connotations of patterned dish consumption. These movements sought to use the signals associated with status, such as the standards of matched dish sets or the display of expensive decoration types, in order to claim that same class status for themselves. These methods worked in a variety of ways, including several that will be explored here.

Although this analysis lacks a chronological breakdown due to the limited number of single-provenience vessels, looking at the patterns within the percentages of decorated vessels reveals some insights about the similarities and differences within and between the mine laborers’ houses and the miner’s house (see Table 6). Bearing in mind the substantial overlap between the depositional timelines for each of the contexts (roughly 1854 until the 1930s for 34, 36, 38, and 40 Back Street, versus roughly the late 1870s until the 1930s for 217 Lower Street), patterns in consumer choice can help illuminate some of the differences in identity performance and social roles between the households.

### *Tablewares*

An analysis of tablewares reveals an array of percentages of decorated vessels across the households (Table 7). Decorated vessel percentages ranged from just under 60% of the vessels identified to more than 80%. The houses at 38/40 Back Street had similar levels of decoration (within 1%), and the houses at 34/36 Back Street had similar levels of

decoration (within 1%), while the percentage of decorated vessels at 217 Lower Street house was evenly between the rates at 34/36 Back Street and 38/40 Back Street.

Table 7. Percentage of Tablewares Decorated by House

	217 Lower St.		34 Back St.		36 Back St.		38 Back St.		40 Back St.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Undecorated	9	28.1%	7	20.0%	6	19.3%	23	39.6%	15	40.5%
Decorated	23	71.8%	28	80.0%	25	80.6%	35	60.3%	22	59.4%
Total	32	100%	35	100%	31	100%	58	100%	37	100%

Although the rates of decoration across the five houses is similar, a closer evaluation of the types of decoration that comprise these percentages reveals more about variation within the working class community (Table 8). Among the most interesting observations from an analysis of the types of decoration observed on tableware vessels recovered from the five households is the fact that several patterns of consumption hold across job type. This pattern is most clearly seen in reference to annular banded, shell edged, scalloped rim, decalcomania, gilded, and transfer printed decorated vessels. Each of these patterns and the potential implications for family and household identity will be explored more in detail.

Table 8. Occurrence of Decoration Types within Tablewares by House\*

	217 Lower St.		34 Back St.		36 Back St.		38 Back St.		40 Back St.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Annular banded	1	3.3%	8	25.8%	5	20.8%	13	33.3%	8	34.7%
Shell edged			8	25.8%	5	20.8%	9	23.0%	2	8.6%
Scalloped Rim	3	10.0%			1	4.1%	1	2.5%	1	4.3%
Molded	8	26.6%	3	9.6%	3	12.5%	6	15.3%	3	13.0%
Decalcomania	11	36.6%			1	4.1%	1	2.5%		
Gilded	2	6.6%								
Hand Painted	2	6.6%	1	3.2%	2	8.3%	2	5.1%	5	21.7%
Transfer printed	1	3.3%	3	9.6%	4	16.6%	5	12.8%	2	8.6%
Flow Blue	1	3.3%								
Sponged	1	3.3%	5	16.1%	1	4.1%	2	5.1%	2	8.6%

Rockingham			1	3.2%	1	4.1%				
Jackfield			1	3.2%	1	4.1%				
Mocha (Seaweed)			1	3.2%						

\*decorative type counts are higher than the actual number of decorated vessels identified due to the fact that some vessels have multiple forms of decoration

The cheapest tableware vessels were undecorated, although edge or marly molded decorations could be obtained at nearly the same price (Miller 1980, 1991b). Increasing from the cost of an undecorated vessel, other decorations could be acquired at gradually higher prices based on their cost to manufacture and transport. According to Hull (2007:84), the next cheapest decoration after undecorated or molded rims were edged vessels, including both feather-edged and shell-edged varieties. The next more expensive decoration type was sponge decorated, consisting of either a sponge spatter or a cut sponge stamped design. Still higher in price were vessels that had been factory slipped, which refers to vessels that feature annular bands or stripes. The next costliest decorated vessels were those that featured hand painted designs, while transfer printed vessel represented the most expensive commonly seen tablewares. The varying costs of these decorations is based on both the amount of labor required to produce each design as well as the ease and pace at which the vessels could be mass produced.

The miner's house on Lower Street, which would have been home to families with slightly more economic resources and greater social capital than those families in the mine laborer's houses on Back Street, reveals a pattern of cheaply decorated ceramic vessels. The most common 19th century decorated vessels recovered from 217 Lower St. (at over 33% of the assemblage) are molded and scalloped rim forms – types of decoration that would have only cost nominally more than their undecorated counterparts

(Figure 41). Comparatively, at the mine laborers' houses on Back Street, molded and scalloped rim vessels appear at nearly half the rate as they do at 217. Additionally, the slightly more expensive shell-edged decorated vessels comprise between 20% and 25% of the assemblages at



Figure 42. Molded rim decorated ceramic vessel.

34, 36, and 38 Back Street, as well as nearly 10% of the 40 Back Street assemblage, and yet are not found at all in the 217 Lower Street assemblage (Figure 42). This pattern of more expensive decorated tableware ceramics at the financially poorer houses on Back Street when compared to the decorated tables present on Lower Street repeat for sponged, slipped (annular banded), and transfer printed decorative types; the only expensive decorative technique where this pattern does not hold true is in the instance of hand painted, where the Lower Street ceramic percentages are similar to the rates seen at 34, 36, and 38 Back Street.



Figure 41. Shell edge decorated ceramic vessel.

An additional layer of information that this analysis provides insight into patterns of trend adoption. Although the depositional episodes for all five houses extended into the 1930s or 1940s, only the miner's house had significant proportions of decal-decorated vessels (over 36%), while minimal numbers were also recovered at 36 and 38 Back Street

(4.1% and 2.5%, respectively) (Figure 43). Decal decorative technology gained

significant market share in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as it emerged as a cheap and easy to



Figure 43. Decal decorated ceramic vessel.

produce decorations. Decal decorated vessels arose as a cheap mainstay that allowed wives to choose from an incredibly vast array of decorative designs without the fears of sunk cost and short popularity that came with transfer printed wares. Their ability to be produced by unskilled workers meant that

decals could be sold for less than painted or printed

wares when they became popular in the United States after 1900 (Majewski and O'Brien

1987:147). Although decals were invented as early as the 1830s, they weren't widely

available in the American market until after the turn of the century (Blaszczyk 1994:145).

Decals were first available to the widespread American market through the 1902 Sears,

Roebuck, and Company catalog (Sears, Roebuck and Company 1902). The technology

became cheaper as the decade progressed and decalomania ceramics remained popular

throughout the United States through the 1950s (Majewski and O'Brien 1987:147; Henry

1987:369).

Another discrepancy seen between the miner's and mine laborers' household assemblage

is the presence of gilded tablewares. The miner's

house excavations yielded two separate gilded

tablewares (6.6% of decorated vessels recovered

at 217 Lower Street) (Figure 44). Although



Figure 44. Gilded decorated ceramic vessel.

gilding as a decorative technology had been around for centuries and was a mainstay of decorations for expensive vessels, such as Chinese porcelain, advances in technology made gilded ceramics increasing within the purview of the average American home. The advent of liquid gold gilding and the preparation of the gold with base metal additions lowered the cost and increased the adhesion of the decoration to the vessel. By the mid-20th century, gilded vessels could be acquired with varying gold content, color thickness, and viscosity (Hunt 1979:126).

The final discrepancy in terms of decoration rates that I will discuss here is the presence of vessels at two mine laborers' houses that are not otherwise present at the miner's house. Both house 34 and 36 Back Street have one vessel each of Jackfield; these are the only Jackfield vessels in the entire assemblage. Jackfield is particularly interesting because it was primarily popular during the 1750s and 1760s and produced in quantity between 1745 and 1790 (Hume 2001:123, Barker and Halfpenny 1990). It received a small revival in the 1870s and 1880s – around the time of the country's centennial celebration, but then



Figure 45. Jackfield decorated ceramic vessel.

disappeared again. The presence of the vessels at Eckley, then, connects them to that brief period of re-introduction, or to a period shortly thereafter (Figure 45). The purchasing or acquiring of vessels associated with the American Revolution during the country's centennial could be read as an expression of patriotism or an attempt to more

closely associate oneself with the country. This has important implication for understanding the identities of migrants.

#### Tableware Discussion.

The patterns observed in ceramic tableware consumption across these households indicate that those families living in areas with less social status are more focused on high-status dishes, while those living in areas already associated with higher-status positions in the colliery are shown to be more concerned with owning in-vogue ceramics.

Taken as part of a larger trend in material consumption, this pattern in expensive, private goods could hint to a normalized practice of using material goods to negotiate class identity to one's self rather than to those outside the household as part of broader social competitions. In this case, the households that are already closer to a middle class identity, such as the miner's family, do not need to prove their class status to themselves and, therefore, do not participate in the same ceramic purchasing patterns as their mine laborer counterparts.<sup>39</sup> This insight reframes class identity from a calculation based on wealth, education, employment, and other grounded aspects of identity into a subjective measure that could be negotiated through the deployment of material culture and behaviors – even if only for one's own satisfaction and convincing (Smith 2007). This also indicates, however, that class was more tenuous: if one could bolster their sense of class identity and affiliation through objectified capital alone, then the loss of that capital could prove to be equally as transformative for one's class identity.

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<sup>39</sup> Technically, the miner's family, too, would have been part of the working class; however, the social climate created within the company town through the use of job- and ethnic-based hierarchies would have painted miners with more of a quasi-middle class identity than as class-equals with mine laborers and slate pickers.



As tablewares, which were intended for private or family dining, these discrepancies were between the more wealthy miner's house and the less wealthy mine laborers' houses reveal another interesting trend in terms of self-identity. Although owning and displaying more expensive (yet out of date) ceramic vessels would not have had any real implications for the ways that people in the community viewed the ceramic owners' class status (because these were private tablewares, not public teawares), the use of these vessels within the home could have had implications for the families' views of themselves. Smith's (2007) work on inconspicuous consumption as it relates to pharmaceuticals, hygiene products, and underwear shows that the adoption of material culture that is generally associated with higher class individuals can be used as a form of self-identification with those higher class people. In this instance, material culture might have been used to reinforce (aspirational) class identity to the vessels owners rather than to an anonymous, external audience. This hypothesis is supported through the observed patterns.

### *Teawares*

Teawares are unique from tablewares in part because their presence itself is a signifier of enacting social status. Taking tea was largely intended to be a social activity that was partaken of by middle- and upper-class women as a physical demonstration of their class status. Teas translated in social achievement is several ways that align with Bourdieu's theory of status: owning a tea set, with its specific and single-purpose vessel forms, demonstrates the ownership of the cultural knowledge to know how to perform the social activity of hosting a tea.

Within the teaware vessels, percentages of decorated vessels varied (Tables 9 and 10). In all five households, decorated vessels counted for at least half of the identified vessels, with percentages ranging from over 50% to nearly 90%. Interestingly, 36 Back Street had the lowest percentage of decorated teawares, despite having the highest percentage of decorated tablewares of all five houses.

Table 9. Percentage of Teawares Decorated by House

	217 Lower St.		34 Back St.		36 Back St.		38 Back St.		40 Back St.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Undecorated	7	31.8%	1	11.1%	7	46.6%	2	28.5%	3	27.2%
Decorated	15	68.1%	8	88.8%	8	53.3%	5	71.4%	8	72.7%
Total	22	100%	9	100%	15	100%	7	100%	11	100%

Table 10. Occurrence of Decoration Types within Teawares by House\*

	217 Lower St.		34 Back St.		36 Back St.		38 Back St.		40 Back St.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Annular banded					3	27.2%	5	71.4%	3	33.3%
Shell edged	1	4.0%								
Scalloped Rim	2	8.0%			1	9.0%				
Molded	3	12.0%	3	30.0%	2	18.1%			2	22.2%
Decalcomania	4	16.0%	1	10.0%						
Gilded/Enameled	8	32.0%	1	10.0%						
Hand Painted	2	8.0%	3	30.0%	1	9.0%	1	14.2%	3	33.3%
Transfer printed	1	4.0%	1	10.0%						
Flow Blue	1	4.0%								
Sponged	2	8.0%	1	10.0%	4	36.3%	1	14.2%	1	11.1%
Rockingham	1	4.0%								

\*decorative type counts are higher than the actual number of decorated vessels identified due to the fact that some vessels have multiple forms of decoration

The patterns of consumption within the decorated teaware assemblage provide significantly more clues as to social status identities than the patterns within the decorated tableware assemblage. In fact, the patterns of consumption appear to group 34 Back Street most closely with the consumption patterns seen at 217 Lower Street than with any of the other houses on Back Street. The assemblages recovered from 36, 38, and

40 Back Street show that these three houses were largely purchasing the same types of decorations on their teawares. In these houses, this pattern focuses primarily on annular banded, molded, hand painted, and sponged decoration, although 36 Back Street also had one scalloped rim teaware vessel (scalloped rim decoration is, however, ultimately a type of molded decoration). Additionally, 38 Back Street had no molded decorated teawares. This pattern of consumption follows the pattern seen in the tablewares: previously expensive but outdated vessel decoration types continuing to be used into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The decoration types represented at the three Back Street houses space the middle-range of decoration types in terms of cost; no transfer-printed teawares, which represent the costliest common decoration type at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were recovered while no shell-edged vessels, representing the cheapest decoration type for that period, were recovered either.<sup>40</sup> The decoration types that are represented in these three houses, however, comprise drastically different percentages of their respective assemblages. For example, annular banded teawares account for over 20% of teawares identified at 36 Back Street, but nearly 75% of those identified at 38 Back Street; likewise, hand painted vessels account for less than 10% of the vessels at 36, but are a full 33% of teawares at 40. Although the individual constituent proportions vary, the trend of sticking to these four decoration types could reveal information about what was available at the company store at Eckley or from the providers the majority of Eckley residents had easy access to, although the variety of teaware decorative types present at 34 Back Street indicate that consumers were not strictly limited to annular banded, molded, hand painted, and sponged wares.

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<sup>40</sup> However, molded designs such as those recovered at two of the three houses were also cheap decoration types.

The teaware decorations identified at 217 Lower Street and 34 Back Street tell a different story. In both cases, the number of decorated types seen is larger (10 types of decoration at 217, six types of decoration at 34, compared to an average of four types at the other Back Street houses) with fewer numbers of vessels for each type (no single decoration type account for more than 32% of the assemblage at either 217 or 34).

### *Ceramic Discussion/Conclusion*

An analysis of the ceramics that families were using to represent and communicate their class status to those around them reveals some interesting patterns in consumption between the family of a miner and the families of mine laborers. It indicates that different households used different strategies of material consumption to perform aspects of the cult of domesticity. I will now explore what their ceramic assemblages can tell us about gender, class, and religion (and, by extension, ethnic) identity performance.

Although this section has focused on the ways that the ceramic assemblages recovered from these five houses are representative of various class-based identity strategies, ceramics also provided information on ethnic and gendered identities in ways that overlap with the class analysis presented here. Although these aspects will be discussed in more detail in their own respective sections, it is important to mention them here also for several reasons. Firstly, decisions were not made singularity or in isolation. Typically, family and household purchasing decisions were made by the head woman (typically the wife) of the household in accordance with her management of the household finances as part of her duties as both a consumer and scientific manager (Horowitz 1985:242). In this instance, we see that this form of class or social status

building through the use of ceramics, then, might be a uniquely gendered expression of this form of identity negotiation. Although the overall messages and symbolisms are related to class identity, the role of gender identity – and indeed the emphasis of class identity as an expression and enactment of gender identity – cannot be extricated from an analysis or discussion of class identity. Secondly, individuals' motivations as they relate to one's ethnic identity (including both an expression of ethnic identity as in line with or in protest against mainstream American cultural identity) must also be acknowledged when referencing families' symbolic decisions. By analyzing decisions that families made regarding cultural norms, historical archaeology can provide insights into the ways that identity played an active role in the daily lives of workers.

As previously discussed, the cult of domesticity specified that proper (white) American households must consist of breadwinning husbands who provided for the stay-at-home wives, who were in turn tasked with ensuring that children were brought up away from the corrupting influences of the world in order to maintain their religious integrity as 'innocents' in the eyes of God. This arrangement put the responsibility for the maintenance of the household and its obedience to the cult of domesticity on to women and women alone. Imperceptibly, the cult of domesticity succeeded in connecting gender performance to class and religious performance as well as establishing proper womanhood as a confluence of interesting identities. Because the majority of churches in the anthracite region at this time were ethnically segregated, the cult of domesticity's connection to religion also served to reinforce ethnic identities. Therefore, a failure to live up to the cult of domesticity's standards on childrearing or home decorating could have broad and far-ranging impacts for a woman's own identity as well as the

community's perspective of her. The stakes were high, with public women who refused or were unable to abide by these standards literally named and shamed in national women's publications; in the isolated social settings of many anthracite company towns, the risks of not conforming – for one's husband's job prospects, for one's children's social standing, for one's reputation in the religious community, and for one's status as a woman, mother, and wife – would likely have been complete social ostracism. It is amidst this social backdrop that these ceramic assemblages were collected, curated, and developed for a variety of social needs. Although ceramics served an essential functional purpose, they also came to symbolize the larger social struggles taking place within multiple forms of identity creation and performance taking place at the individual and household level. Ceramics were a way to display wealth (such as through the use of decorated and specialized vessels) as well as a way to demonstrate knowledge or obedience to larger class ideologies (such as the preference for matched dishes). Yet, for women, ceramics were just one aspect of a larger identity performance: as middle class domestic standards were also an integral part of the cult of domesticity, which was itself a measure of women's 'womanliness' and religious virtue, ceramic assemblages were therefore also a measure of a woman herself. The connections between these forms of identity as identified through the individual ceramic assemblages cannot be teased apart, as women's duty to elevate their households' class status, appropriately perform her gender roles, and demonstrate her piety through her mastery of her home and its outfitting would have all been motivations and factors in the decision making processes that resulted in the ceramic assemblages that we recovered. Keeping these colliding

influences in mind, I will now discuss how the ceramics discussed here can be interpreted with an eye to intersecting identities.

The selection of ceramics and ceramic decorative patterns would have been a woman's task, historically, as part of her larger job of maintaining her household. Because of this gendered decision making process, I will refer to women and the performance of femininity when discussing the motivations behind consumption methods. In this way, ceramics provide a unique opportunity to study specifically women's form of identity negotiation through material goods. The patterns of ceramic consumption at the company town house sites reveal that the household with more money routinely more closely fulfills the class expectations of a middle class identity than the poorer households; however, the poorer households belonging to largely mine laborers also pursued a middle class identity, but in an outdated form that was more accessible for their economic situation.

For my purposes, 217 Lower Street is identified as being closer to the middle class social standards due to its higher income and situation in a better part of the town when compared to the collection of houses on Back Street. Because of the differences in income level and, therefore, ability to own the props of proper middle class household (which also fulfills the requirements of the cult of domesticity), households' ability to abide by the rules of the cult of domesticity would vary; however, because of the importance of the cult of domesticity in defining proper American domestic life during the 19th and early 20th centuries, I am interested in whether women completely ignored the cult of domesticity in their purchasing decisions, adopted some aspects and not others, or whether they found new ways of enacting their chosen identity.

The first forms of analysis I presented, the coarse vs. refined and paste type breakdowns, indicated that all five houses chose to abide by the class-determined prescriptions for proper household dish assemblages. Percentages of refined wares were above 70% at every household, although only 38 Back Street had proportions of refined wares that were similar to those seen at 217 Lower Street (87.1% to 90.4%). This is interesting as refined wares were the accepted standards for middle and upper class household ceramic assemblages and because all of the houses in the study had a majority refined earthenware assemblage, it indicates that all five houses were actively pursuing the consumption patterns required for high social statuses. Refined earthenwares were more expensive to purchase and replace than coarse earthenwares, which were often locally available; however, refined earthenwares represented (often unintentional or unknowing) participation in a long and on-going tradition of social signaling.

Creamware, the first of the refined earthenwares, was created in the 1700s as an English substitute for Chinese porcelains, which were enormously expensive and only available to the wealthy. Creamware grew to dominate the world tableware markets by the 1790s, followed by successive new paste and glazing technologies including pearlware, whiteware, and ironstone, each of which grew closer to the ultimate goal of cheaply mimicking the bright and hard pastes of Chinese-made porcelains (Miller 1980:13-14). Additionally, the introduction of creamware helped mark the transition to definitions of gentility that relied on commodities and etiquette and therefore marks the beginning of consumption as a “proxy of consumer choice and social activities occurring in the home” (Estey 2013:7). The fact that all five households were engaging in practices of social signaling that had been taking place for centuries indicates the depths to which social



conformity and definitions of appropriate behavior controlled even rural, migrant communities.

The patterns of paste types present at the Eckley houses reveals different strategies for conforming to the social pressures placed on women's management of their households. While the 217 Lower Street assemblage has much higher proportions of higher status ceramics such as porcelain and no out-of-date ceramic paste types, such as pearlware or creamware, the four mine laborers' houses show a variety of outdated paste types that were both out-of-date and unlikely to be parts of matched sets, but might have represented similar decoration styles. 34 and 36 Back Street's wide variety of refined earthenware paste types helped to pad the percentage of refined earthenware vessels the household owned. These ceramic consumption patterns indicate a duality of class identity: the purchase and potential curation of cheaper, lower status out-dated refined earthenwares while simultaneously continuing to pursue refined vessel types. A review of the decoration present on these creamware, yellowware, and pearlware vessels shows that the majority of decorative styles on these outdated vessels (consisting of molded rims, annular banding, and undecorated forms) would have matched with whiteware vessels also present in the assemblages. The only exemptions to this are the presence of a decalcomania decorated creamware vessel, which represents the only decal decorated vessel in that house's assemblage, and a mocha seaweed yellowware vessel, with mocha seaweed decoration being unique to yellowware vessels, which explains why it is not present on any other vessels in the assemblage. Given this pattern, it is possible that outdated paste types were still used to create visibly-matched dish sets, even though a

closer examination of the vessels would have revealed that they were not actually matched.

Meanwhile, 40 Back Street had the lowest proportion of refined earthenwares due in part to the large number of redware vessels recovered from that context. The assemblages recovered from 38 and 40 Back Street are similar except in one key aspect: 38 Back Street has 10.6% of its assemblage in the form of pearlware vessels. The inclusion of this paste type alone boosts the percentage of refined earthenwares recovered from this household to be close to the rates of refined earthenwares witnessed at 217 Lower Street. This key fact leads to a potential interpretation: in attempting to own and wield an appropriate number of refined earthenware vessels, the woman or women at 38 Back Street elected to rely heavily on pearlware vessels, which had been in vogue as recently as the 1820s and would have been easy to find as a cheaper alternative to similarly decorated whiteware vessels.

The class differences between the miner's household and the mine laborers' households, as well as evidence of increasing attempts to conform to the standards of gentility as wealth increased, are reflected in the vessel form findings. The miner's house has the greatest percentage of teaware vessels as well as serving vessels of all of the houses, reflecting the women in that household's greater obedience to the societally expected behaviors (such as hosting dinners and teas) that she would have been required to participate in as a woman of aspiring middle class standing. This difference also points to the possibility that, despite all working families in the company town being members of the working classes, those women living with men in higher positions within the company had additional pressures to perform a middle class lifestyle than those women

living with unskilled laborers at the mines. The comparison of plates to bowls provides another striking example of the differences in lived experiences that took place between those living in ‘better’ parts of the company town when compared to those living on the towns’ edges. The household at 217 Lower Street is the only house of the five that has more plates than bowls, although even these percentages are close (25.0% plates to 20.0% bowls, or a 5% difference). The four mine laborers’ houses have varying rates of difference, but interestingly, the least amount of difference is seen at 38 Back Street. 38 Back Street is the same house that had artificially raised their proportions of refined earthenwares through the inclusion of large amounts of outdated pearlware vessels. This could indicate that although the mine laborers’ families were consuming more bowl-based meals than plated meals, which went against a common identifier of a middle class lifestyle, some families were actively making choices to close the gap between their lifeways and those expected of middle class citizens.

The decoration types identified for both tablewares and teawares reveals opposing strategies for social uplift: while the families residing at the miner’s house chose to pursue the most in-vogue, new decorative patterns they could afford, even though these new forms ended up consisting of low- to mid-range in cost vessels, the mine laborers’ houses pursued more expensive (though out of date) decorative types that would have been costly when they were originally produced. While the miner’s house had tablewares with decorative patterns consisting primarily of decalcomania and molded decorative types, the mine laborers’ houses had tableware assemblages consisting largely of annular banded, shell edged, and hand painted or transfer printed vessels. By the first decades of the 20th century, decalcomania decorated vessels would have represented the newest

decorative types available to households, yet the mine laborer's houses have very low rates of decalcomania decorated vessels (one vessel each at 36 and 38 Back Street, none at 34 or 40). A similar pattern is identified with the teaware assemblage, where 217 Lower Street, the miner's house, has nearly one-third of their teawares having gilded decoration, while decalcomania and molded decorations were also well represented. The mine laborers' houses, on the other hand, have teawares that are primarily decorated with annular banded, molded, hand painted, or sponged designs. While all of these decorative motifs would have been signs of status in the previous century, they would have been outdated by the time these dishes were deposited, with the types of vessels recovered at 217 Lower Street more in vogue by this period. This pattern indicates that the mine laborers household, while attempting to adopt the consumption patterns of middle class culture, were either outdated in their knowledge of the proper ceramic vessels to own and display or lacked the funds to buy the most current fashions.

The paste type assemblages seen in the four houses on Eckley's Back Street indicate that working class women found a successful work-around for the ceramic requirements set in motion by societal class standards and bolstered by the cult of domesticity. Rather than devote extra expenditures to purchasing new whiteware vessels in the newest decorative patterns, as is seen at 217 Lower Street, a house that had more means than those at Eckley, the women at Eckley choose to supplement their whiteware dishes with cheaper but stylistically similar vessels in paste types that pre-dated whiteware. This method of class signaling reveals how women were able to bend society's expectations of them in order to accommodate their economic realities.

However, the vessel form analysis indicates that only the miner's household was following the class standard related to plated meals. This difference can be interpreted as an extension of one's degree of ethnic solidarity: ethnic foodways likely played a large role in dictating the types of food that workers ate, which resulted in those families who maintained strong Old World identities preferring to eat and consume meals that would have involved communal (bowl) eating patterns, such as ethnic stews and soups like *halushki* and *goulash*. This indicates that perhaps the higher one was within the social hierarchy of the company town, the greater the pressure to conform to middle class identities, including those that clashed with ethnic preferences. Those that were further removed from class expectations, then, were able to preserve their culture within the home.

Furthermore, the decorated vessel evidence further illuminates the class performance differences between those who were economically and socially closer to the middle class and those who weren't. The women in the miner's house had the social knowledge to know which decoration types to purchase in order to demonstrate their ability to keep up with the social trends in ceramic decoration – in this case, gilded and decaled vessels. These women also had the funds to exercise this knowledge. It is unclear whether the variation in subscription to the middle class consumption patterns by the mine laborers' households was due to a lack of funds or a lack of knowledge, or how the miner's family was able to access these forms of information, but the mine laborers' households were not. These differences could also indicate varying degrees of pressure on different parts of the social hierarchy within the mine complex to conform to mainstream American domestic standards.

By still fulfilling their class status responsibilities, women would have defended their roles as mothers and wives within the cult of domesticity and preserved their status as proper, pious, American women. In this way, these decisions about ceramic vessels represent the confluence of a variety of identities, including gender, class, and, to a lesser extent, ethnicity.

### Home Decorations

As discussed previously, home decorations were an important aspect of a woman's subscription to the cult of domesticity. Because her abilities as a wife and mother and, indeed, as a woman at all were based heavily on the state of her home, women had a vested interest in obeying the cult of domesticity's recommendations pertaining to household décor. These expectations and standards were outlined by the ideology's doctrine, but further supplemented through home manuals, which became a popular means of sharing information about women's expected behavior and home presentation. This section will explore the materials related to household décor and its connections to broader gendered and class ideologies from that period.

Beginning in the mid-19th century, the parlor became "one of the defining features of middle-class American homes" (Fitts 2002:6). Oral histories from Pardeesville confirm the importance of the parlor as a social gathering place in the company town context. In the parlor, women would have entertained guests and hosted family activities. Therefore, the majority of efforts related to conveying a household's subscription to the ideological prescriptions of the day would have been centered on this room. It would have been decorated carefully and intentionally. Parlors served as yet

another barrier between the center of the home and the public within the genteel lifestyle, where spaces were used symbolically to establish social distance and social distinction (McInnis 1999:33). However, Fitts notes that, because of the cramped living quarters that most migrant families had, the parlor in the typical immigrant home would have been a departure from that found in a standard middle class home because the parlor would have doubled as a sleeping space. Additionally, Fitts finds that “at a time when the accepted middle-class décor emphasized simplicity, working-class and immigrant parlors tended toward the opulent” (2002:7). Although much of the opulence that Fitts identifies, including cheap lace curtains, religious portraits, plush furniture, and carpets, are comprised of organic materials that would not be preserved in the archaeological record, other items such as glass and ceramic decorations have been (McInnis 1999).

Home manuals, a resource for middle class maintenance and a tradition that dates back to the origin of the cult of domesticity in the early 19th century, provide clear prescriptions for leveraging appropriate forms of conspicuous consumption into social symbols and status. House manuals held unprecedented social sway over class-conscious wives across the country throughout the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. Home manuals provided a resource for 19th century married women to maintain their class status through staying apprised of the newest and in-vogue fashions in society. Additionally, displaying *the right* forms of household decorations became an important way of demonstrating one’s ‘moral virtues’, as the strongly held cultural belief that “our works and our surroundings corrupt or refine our souls” because even the most minute details served to “act constantly upon the imagination and determine its contents”

dictated the strict management of domestic environments (Henderson 1897:37; Mullins 2001).

This idea of status through material goods filtered down through the masses, creating markets of desire as people sought the newest and most desirable objects and behaviors that could identify an individual as belonging to these upper echelons of society. In order to keep abreast of the newest trends, people began cataloging the items and behaviors associated with these higher status individuals and publishing the proceedings as home and ladies' manuals.

Through objects and ideas such as home decorations, room functions, and household amenities, the home arose as yet another way that families could signify their position within society, and the importance of home manuals and of keeping up with their recommendations as a method to maintain a middle class identity grew. The act of consulting the home manuals was itself an expression of class identity, as the manuals provided information on how to act and live within society as a woman with a specific social standing. Late 19th and early 20th century home manuals dictated approaches and methods for arranging and outfitting one's house, ranging from the use of wall paper to the proper layout of a kitchen to diagrams on how to build multifunctional items of furniture (see Beecher and Stowe 1869).

### *Consumption, Emulation, and the Introduction of Mass Production*

In order to understand the relationship between material good consumption, class (and other identities) emulation, and the introduction of mass produced goods into the consumer marketplace, I will begin with a discussion of the theoretical concepts that



relate consumption with emulative behavior and consumer taste preferences. I will then discuss the ways that mass production enabled consumers to fulfill their emulative desires through the consumption of goods.

#### Consumption as Emulation and Taste.

The archaeological assemblage at Eckley and Pardeesville yielded a fascinating array of objects intended to mimic or emulate more expensive or more exclusive forms of material culture, including fake jewels, pressed glass decorative vessels, and mis-matched dishes with similar decorative patterns reminiscent of matched dish sets. While these objects seem unimportant or marginal within the broader scheme of social signaling and the creation of social differences, I argue that the intentionality behind the choices to purchase and own these objects – and the contexts in which these decisions were made – provides insights into the construction of working class identity in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania. In order to understand how and why goods were consumed, one must first understand the social contexts in which those objects were made, distributed, used, and, eventually, discarded (Shackel 1993). This chapter seeks to investigate the larger symbolic roles of a selection of artifact types in order to understand the choices behind the selection of those objects beyond their functional or utilitarian value (Cook et al. 1996:50), including the role that newly invented forms of material culture introduced at the turn of the 20th century played in allowing working class individuals the ability to consume material culture that was reminiscent of that which had previously been available only to the wealthy.

Veblen was among the first to theorize about the connection between material goods, consumption, and class. He noted that social status is often conveyed through material possessions, causing those in lower social status positions to strive to acquire possessions similar to those owned by individuals in higher social positions (1899). The desire to have these objects and the process of emulation spurs cycles of taste and demand for 'leisure' goods; in fact, desire is replaced (at some level) by imperative, as Veblen notes that, "it becomes indispensable to accumulate, to acquire property [connected to the leisure class], in order to retain one's good name" (1899:29). Bourdieu then expanded upon this idea to connect concepts of taste (aesthetic consumption) as being hallmarks of one's social class. The idea of 'taste' allows different people to read material culture in different ways depending on their social circumstances, which means that everyday objects are invested with both material and symbolic significance (Miller 1987:105; Shackel 1993). Bourdieu suggests that children are raised within systems that promote class-coded concepts of taste that subsequently follow those children into adulthood. This initial social indoctrination then follows individuals for life as part of their culturally-defined yet natural-seeming *habitus*, which serves as a force that justifies social inequity as a natural phenomenon. In this way, power relations are established and maintained across generations.

Through knowledge gained through family socialization and channels of formal education, the dominant classes are able to "affirm their high social status through consumption of cultural forms consecrated by institutions with cultural authority" (Johnston and Baumann 2007:197). Along with this preference for "legitimate culture," these higher status individuals develop "aversions for unrefined, illegitimate, or popular

culture” (2007:197). However, being able to recognize the physical trappings of a certain identity was only one part (embodied capital) of a larger strategy of establishing social difference. The economic and/or social ability to own the objects consecrated by institutions with cultural authority as being representative of that high social status remained a major barrier to ownership for a majority of people.

The lived experience of social status wasn’t limited to the level of the individual, however, as Bourdieu’s idea of “cultural competence” also translated to the household (and inter-household) level. Individual acts of habitus combined to characterize every consumption decision and strategy within a household, thereby reflecting the class taste of the house’s inhabitants (Lawrence 2013:137). Blanton (1994:9-11) has noted that the household then served an “indexical function,” whereby social pressure was used to regulate the outwardly displayed taste and consumption patterns, which worked to standardize class identity within a neighborhood by reinforcing ‘appropriate’ social behaviors and divisions. Under this logic, any household within a neighborhood can serve as a representative of the class status for the entire neighborhood through this social pressure exerted by neighbors aiming to homogenize their neighbors’ class status. This is particularly the case with household furnishings, where entertaining guests or housing boarders allowed *objects* the ability to “structure and reinforce social relationship within the household and... to negotiate the household’s position *vis-à-vis* others” (Lawrence 2013:137). The objects within a house attest to the social taste developed by the home’s residents, which is then negotiated through its interactions with neighbors. In this way, taste begins to undergird class at the community or neighborhood level as neighbors pressure those around them to adopt the ‘proper’ outward identifiers of taste and, by

extension, demonstrate their cultural competence. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that the mechanisms that regulated class within the home also affected other aspects of identity, specifically gender identity. Women's cultural roles as guardians of the home and their responsibilities relating to the physical aspects of the home help solidify a discussion of household decorations as belonging squarely within a gendered, feminine lens within the industrial company town setting (Lawrence 2013; Spain 1993). Maintaining a middle-class home's social status was specifically a middle-class gender defined responsibility. In this way, discussions of the class-status of homes and the ways that households negotiated their class performances within their larger communities coincides with discussions of proper gendered performances.

The aesthetic preferences that people tend toward, whether in "cosmetics, clothing or home decoration," become avenues for "assert[ing] ones' position in social space, as a rank to be upheld, or a distance to be kept" (Bourdieu 1984:57). Material consumption of the *right* objects, then, becomes a way of demonstrating one's belonging to certain social tiers within the larger hierarchy. The opening of consumer markets at the end of the 18th century made it even easier to engage in these emulative behaviors. Beginning in the 1790s, public consumption of material goods had increasingly replaced private consumption as the primary means of conveying one's wealth and status. Around the time of the French Revolution, artisans and crafts people increasingly sold their wares to a public audience through participation in the public marketplace, which opened the ownership of these goods from nobility to the greater populous who could afford them (Kwass 2004). The ability to own and display items that were formerly only within the purview of nobility was used to establish and built cultural capital. Veblen (1899:14),

working from the outdated cultural evolution model, observes that as societies ‘progress’ (i.e. move towards an industrial economic model), “property [material culture] is still of the nature of trophy, but... it becomes more and more a trophy of successes scored in the game of ownership.” In short, the accumulation of multiple ‘trophies,’ or representations, of social success becomes necessary for demonstrating one’s superior position within the social hierarchy. This basic concept – that the relationship between material culture and status inevitably leads to patterns of accumulation – can be divorced from Veblen’s cultural hierarchy model and appreciated as a standalone concept. The desire to engage with these processes of social hierarchy and accumulation is driven in large part by the fact that material wealth confers power. The need to constantly accumulate more objects to demonstrate status and power creates feedback loops in which “the desire for wealth can scarcely be satiated in any individual instance” (Veblen 1899:16). Veblen goes on to argue that, while comfort or convenience might play some role in the patterns of accumulation that he witnessed in industrializing societies, this cannot explain the entire phenomenon because then the “wants of a community might conceivably be satisfied at some point in the advance of industrial efficiency”; however, in Veblen’s view, “since the struggle is substantially a race for reputability on the basis of an invidious comparison, no approach to a definitive attainment is possible” (1899:16). Furthermore, because power and consumption are limitless, the average individual will always be dissatisfied with his own possessions, and even if the individual one day reaches “what may be called the normal pecuniary standard of... his class in the community,” at that point the individual will desire to increase the distance between his own status and that of the average standard (1899:16). However, a number of authors have challenged Veblen’s

assertions in order to highlight the role that agency plays in these consumption decisions as well as to acknowledge the role that goods play in representing larger symbolic categories rather than the individual level as Veblen suggests (see Douglas and Isherwood 1978). To summarize, people seek to emulate those in their community or society who have more power and a higher social status by mimicking the ownership of the meaning-laden material culture that those higher status individuals own. The cycle of consumption reinforces itself as people continue to accumulate more in a vain attempt to own more than their neighbors. These patterns of consumption trickle down through society and into the lowest classes, creating consistently-upward-aiming patterns of material emulation. However, that emulation is not limited to just emulation of wealth, but also the emulation of other aspects of identity that can be signaled through material goods, such as gender, ethnicity, and religiosity, among others.

#### Consumption's Other Social Roles.

The use and ownership of newly-introduced or newly-available material forms also translated into the daily lives of the lower and working classes in unexpected ways. Archaeological investigations of colonial-era Annapolis, Maryland, have revealed that consumption and the introduction of new behaviors was done during this period in order to increase personal discipline, which was necessary for the introduction of an industrial economy (Shackel 1993). Other research has demonstrated that patterns of consumption were brandished to demonstrate workers' discontent, possibly with the transition to an industrial lifestyle (Shackel 1996:145). In both cases, the adoption of material culture consumption patterns break with Veblen's hypothesis on status emulation as well as

Bourdieu's hypothesis on taste, demonstrating that consumption can also be infused with other meanings, including resistance and control. In the example of Northeastern Pennsylvania, the adoption by some families of middle-class material culture can be read as its own form of consumptive resistance to corporate control, such as through the acquisition of goods from sources outside the company store and through the performance of class identity that increasingly challenged the hierarchy that the company attempted to maintain via architecture over the town.

#### Mass Production and Wish Fulfillment.

While consumption as a means of social signaling, whether through the ownership of rare or expensive materials, had become a central characteristic of Western civilization during the Age of Enlightenment, technological and manufacturing shifts that arose at the beginning of the 20th century turned the traditional relationship between scarcity and desire on its head. Although the majority of discussions on artifacts within historical archaeology end at the beginning of the 20th century, Roller (2015) takes these original ideas on consumption and extends them into the era of mass consumption. The introduction of scientific management, mechanization, immigrant labor, and improved transportation methods – the hallmarks of mass production – enabled industrialists to produce more goods for less expense. Producers saw this abundance of production as an opportunity to “bridge across social conflict” through the elimination of the anxieties of modern capitalist life through a new (consumer-based) form of democratic participation (Roller 2015:261-262; Ewen 1976). Material goods that had previously only been available to the elite could now be available to everyone. It was believed that this new era

of product availability would bring about “a new definition of democracy rooted in a shared market, a consumer democracy” and thereby “neutralize the anxieties of modern capitalist life” (Roller 2015:262). However, production became so streamlined that “a crisis of capitalism had come about arising from ‘underconsumption’” (2015:261). Drawing on psychological manipulation via propaganda tactics developed during World War I to direct, maintain, and cultivate public opinions, theorists and intellectuals demonstrated that the answer to under consumption was to “create consumer desire where there is none” (2015:267). These individuals saw American society as “fragmented by cleavages of class, race and political persuasion” and saw common participation in a consumptive framework (which was conveniently engineered by these same businessmen) as an opportunity to unite these factions (2015:267). Roller’s take on mass consumption, then, is that encouraging people to engage in the consumer democracy was a means to pacify or neutralize the parts of society who posed a risk to social stability, such as industrial workers who were increasingly moving to models of collective bargaining which threatened the supremacy and control of industrial owners (and therefore some of America’s most powerful men). In this way, consumption transcended identity performance or emulation and became the bond that kept an increasingly disparate society functioning.

Drawing on Freud’s ideas of psychoanalysis, Bernays posited that peoples’ desires for material objects originates from consumers’ unconscious wants. The desired objects served as symbolic representations of these unconscious desires, with people feeling that they were moving closer to achieving their dreams through the act of consumption. Bernays then suggests that the key to controlling ‘modern society’ is to



understand human desires and use that knowledge to manipulate people through their values and insecurities (Bernays 1928:52-53; Roller 2015:301-302). This type of ‘wish fulfillment’-through-consumption tactic was wholeheartedly embraced by a public who was largely unaware they were being psychologically manipulated. Bringing together Veblen’s ideas on human social behavior and the desire to emulate together with this ability to *deliver*, through new technologies and material types, the items that had previously only been available to the elite within society served the dual function of suppressing worker discontent while boosting workers’ impressions of their own autonomy and social success.

At the level of the consumer, individuals began turning to all sorts of new and never before seen products. New technologies allowed manufacturers to “manipulate surfaces, materials and forms in ways that confounded the senses but still reference the aesthetic history” (Roller 2015:305). Among this new class of goods are a number of items that intended to mimic much more expensive or rare objects. The era of democratic consumption meant that even goods that experienced scarcity due to natural supply curves, such as precious metals, gemstones, and wild animal products such as ivory and tortoiseshell, could be easily and cheaply recreated in plastic or Bakelite. Other technologies for imitating the effects and finishes of expensive material culture, such as pressed glass to imitate cut glass, ruby stained glass to imitate ruby flashed glass, and cheaper gilding technologies, also entered the consumer market around this time. The promise of mass production and the realization of a consumer democracy was on the horizon.

While the phenomenon that Roller discusses becomes increasingly prevalent in the 1920s, the technological advances of the Progressive Era and the societal shift that began to reframe individuals as consumers started in the late 19th century. These initial forays into the potential of synthetic materials to reproduce objects quickly and cheaply would serve as the introduction to the possibilities that mass production and consumption had to offer. Parallel to the Progressive Era's emphasis on limiting the damages on the greater populous caused industrialization and urbanization, Progressive Era reformers also turned their focus to ensure fair and safe consumer products. The passages of the Sherman Antitrust (1890) and Clayton Antitrust (1914) Acts, the Pure Food and Drug Act (1906), the Meat Inspection Act (1906), and the Federal Trade Commission Act (1914) all fell within a broader goal of protecting consumers from unsavory business practices, including price fixing, monopolies, false advertising, and preventing the sale of mislabeled or dishonestly labelled products (Cohen 1990:21; Urofsky 1985). This burgeoning interest in consumers as actors is what Cohen (1990:21) calls the "first wave consumer movement." A national focus on individuals as consumers in need of protection was growing. It is within this dawning of the new era of consumption that singular instances of mass produced goods, such as faux luxury items including nylon stockings and fake gems, begins to appear in the material records of working class contexts. The true start of the consumer revolution, however, wouldn't occur until the 1930s, when social attitudes about the role of consumers in maintaining a healthy economy transformed consumption into a meaningful and political act. A question from the 1930 census focusing on whether households owned a radio set helps to underscore the rapid ubiquity of the consumer mindset. The mass consumer society imagined by

Bernays and others, in which mass produced goods came to dominate every aspect of American life, would grow exponentially during the war as consumption was tied to patriotism and would come to define middle class American life in the post-war period (Cohen 1990:9). Mass consumption as it is known and practiced today, with its focus on brand names and widespread standardization, would come to define American consumer life by the 1950s.

Of course, the corruption of the old system of class-based wealth displays did not happen without backlash from those whose status had been defined and maintained under this old and quickly fading system. As early as the 1840s, critics attacked the industrialization of consumer products for precisely the attributes that made it attractive to the masses: the increasingly widespread availability of items. Critics of industrialization focused in particular on the “romantic aesthetic of craftsmanship” and commented that such “‘cheap deceptions’ as cast iron painted to resemble wood or marble enabled people ‘to assume a semblance of decoration far beyond either their means or their station’” (A.W.N. Pugin 1841 quoted in Meikle 1995:13). Others sought to use creativity to set their work with genuine materials apart from forgeries. William Morris fought the replication of status objects by recommending to commercial product designers that they “try to get the most out of your material... something should be done with it which is especially natural to it, something that cannot be done with any other... Set yourselves as much as possible against all machine work” (Morris 1899:22). These arguments ultimately coalesce around the central idea that objects that are produced through processes that mimic natural ones “falsely claimed a natural or cultural richness they did not possess” (Meikle 1995:13). Here we see authenticity emerging as a measure

of status, although as the eventual market saturation of faux materials indicates, these arguments from craftspeople and designers to hold the line against unauthentic forms of consumer products ultimately failed.

### *Consumption of Imitation and Identity*

The age of democratic consumption enabled consumers to purchase, if not the authentic version, a facsimile of the objects that they sought to use to demonstrate or represent their identities to others as well as to themselves. The ability for all consumers to engage in these symbolic displays was expanded dramatically through new material technologies. With cost and rarity no longer major concerns, consumers could become (through the use of material culture and its embedded symbolism) anyone. Although my discussion in this chapter will focus primarily on how this new-found form of consumption enabled consumers to adopt the trappings of a middle-class lifestyle, thereby focusing on class and social status as the primary form of identity under negotiation via material culture, this same argument can be extended to a plethora of other socially-desirable identities than can be signaled through material culture.

Even before the unequivocal success of plastic as a means for expanding product supplies and the corresponding successes of Bernays and others in creating public demand to meet that overproduction, industrial innovation had focused largely on ‘improvement,’ or the creation of new technologies to reduce production costs in order to lower products’ price point and increase corporate profit (Friedel 2007). As early as the 1790s, industrial innovators had been finding ways to recreate in-demand status items through the use of newly invented technologies, such as Josiah Wedgwood’s use of

molded jasperware ceramic to mimic carved cameos. However, technological advances in the latter half of the 19th century dramatically increased the speed at which they were able to lower costs on some extant goods as well as create cheaper substitutes with similar-looking goods. For instance, the introduction of decalcomania decorated ceramic vessels in the 1890s provided a cheaper but aesthetically-similar replacement for transfer-printed wares, although distinguishing between the two decorative forms is easily done and therefore doesn't fit the profile of an imitation technology (Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab 2015). Although technological innovation was a central part of industrial development and progress, it is the rate at which this innovation occurred during the last decades of the 19th and first decades of the 20th centuries that sets them apart in terms of the types of varieties of consumer goods introduced to the public market.

The impact that material consumption had on multiple forms of identity (not just class identity) is also important to keep in mind. While the ownership and display of certain types of material items might have signaled to outsiders, as well as to the objects' owner, information about that person's position within the larger symbolic social hierarchy, different forms of material goods could also convey information about other aspects of a person's identity. Gender identity, in particular, was heavily dependent on one's accompanying class identity, with different class and gender identity combinations requiring different material culture for the expression of the identity. A proper performance of genteel femininity required the ownership and display of a variety of props, including the proper deployment of fashion-appropriate jewelry, clothing, and cosmetics. For contrast, the performance of a working class feminine identity would

require entirely different material objects, such as items related to labor and economic production. Together, we see that identity really only exists in society if the material aspects that signify that identity to others are also present; for example, a woman cannot, by definition, be categorized as middle class if she owns and displays the material aspects identified as belonging to a working class lifestyle.<sup>41</sup> In this way, we see how consumption worked in both directions as a factor in determining identity: it served as a representation of identity that consumers sought to convey as well as a process by which consumers were made into bearers of certain identities. The complex symbolic and relational functions of material culture reiterate the multifaceted roles that material culture plays in people's everyday lives, and highlights the need to approach identity analysis from an intersectional perspective.

Of course, gender isn't the only aspect of identity that was intersectionally related to class identity and conveyed through the consumption of material culture. Archaeological findings in the working class sectors of cities as well as in company towns provides evidence that material culture was a means for reinforcing ethnic identities (Fracchia and Brighton 2015; Reckner 2004) as well as a reflection of the owners' identities as migrants (Brighton 2008). Irish immigrants in Texas, Maryland, and Paterson, New Jersey, used and deposited kaolin smoking pipes depicting Irish nationalist symbols, including 'Home Rule' and references to the Red Hand of Ulster (Reckner 2004:254; Fracchia and Brighton 2015:138). These symbols, however, took on new

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<sup>41</sup> Therefore, people can also begin to use material culture to establish claims to certain identities through specific patterns of consumption, and although these categorizations would likely fall flat in the face of an actual social challenge because owning the props of an identity does not confer the habitus and social titles also required for many identities, the ability to shallowly and/or temporarily claim a social status other than their own would have had massive repercussions for social hierarchical stability.

meanings in the new social and labor contexts of the United States and increasingly served as representations of the hybridization and transformation of Irish and Irish-American identity (Reckner 2004:257). Additionally, because these Irish symbols were also directly connected to working class struggles and the broader labor movement in the US, the deployment of these types of materials reflected specifically a working class identity.<sup>42</sup>

In other instances, the adoption of certain types of material culture was seen as a rejection of non-American ethnic identities and, potentially, a method of strengthening their own identities as Americans. In one instance, the introduction of celluloid into shirt collars and cuffs was marketed to consumers alongside cartoon ads heavily biased with anti-Chinese sentiments. The confluence of middle class material culture (such as cotton collared shirts, which needed to be washed every time they were worn and, therefore, represented a level of maintenance that was better suited for a household with access to servants, such as the middle and upper class) with ethnicity or ethnic stereotypes reiterates the role that material culture and identity performance played in shaping individuals' own sense of self. In this instance, the connections between class and ethnicity are inextricably linked through the use of a material object. These types of intersectional perspectives when interpreting material remains help to reinforce the multiple forms of cultural symbolism that objects can hold simultaneously.

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<sup>42</sup> This example of an intersection between ethnic and class status also related to gender identity. Although women's smoking was heavily frowned upon in society, these standards were more specifically aimed at middle and upper class women; in fact, stereotypes for working class Irish women, in particular, identified them as being hardened smokers, thereby further blurring the lines between identities, material culture, and performance.

Because class is not a category, but a confluence of symbolic representations and internal and external judgments rooted in social and economic relationships, the introduction of these new material types had significant implications for workers and their families in the Northeastern Pennsylvania anthracite region. If material culture (or lack thereof) was the measure by which one judged their own (and their neighbors') success, then the sudden availability of objects that looked similar if not identical to objects that held widespread social value was vitally important for shaping how workers measured their own identity. Without changing any of the social, productive, or economic relationships, workers found themselves suddenly in command of an expanded cultural sphere. With this new sphere brought the appearance of new wealth and new possibilities, although these imagined futures were often only as real as the fake gems and imitation cut glass that supported the imagine of those futures and further served as a redirection in workers' source of discontent away from labor conditions. Bernays' goal of social stability was actualized. However, I must first discuss if, as well as how and where, workers and their families in the anthracite region adopted these practices of conspicuous consumption of faux status symbols, as well as the ways in which the adoption of these symbols re-shaped how class was negotiated, performed, and displayed once the most obvious of Bourdieu's three forms of capital had been corrupted.

#### *Conveying Social Status through Mimicry in the Anthracite Region*

Mass production and the variety of consumer goods it introduced into middle and working class society allowed consumers the ability to live out their fantasies of wealth and abundance with the physical props of upper class lifestyles for the first time. The



decorative possessions that the wealthy had used to visually maintain the social hierarchy, possessions such as precious stones, high maintenance clothing, rare materials, and so on, could now be replicated in plastic and ordered through the mail, making the exclusivity of such items plummet and the consumption barriers to class status crumble. The deployment of goods that imitated expensive and status-laden objects well known in society enabled people to transcend their actual circumstances and pursue the material lifestyles they *desired* to live. In this way, working class families became members of a new social strata: they had transcended the economic limits of their purchasing power and were increasingly filling their houses and their lives with fake versions of expensive objects. In this way, consumers became members of the *socially* newly rich without substantial changes in their economic conditions to support that identity (McCracken 1986). Using the archaeologically-recovered examples of glass and plastic ‘gens’, decorative pressed glassware, carnival glass, ruby stained glass, celluloid, Bakelite, rubber, and plastic combs, and gilded and decalcomania-decorated ceramic vessels, I will explore how material culture opened a host of new possibilities for working class consumers, including the ability to re-define their identities. I will demonstrate that faux status items adopted by working class families as part of their material assemblage in concert with the establishment of a new economic reality that laid the groundwork for what Lizabeth Cohen (2003) terms the ‘Consumer Republic’ that came to define middle class American life in the post-war era. The presence of these mass produced faux-status commodities, even in limited quantities as the archaeological discussion will show, in the context of working class households dating to the turn of the century reveals the brackish area of the conversion from Veblen’s era of consumption as a proxy for social status to

Cohen's era of consumption as a form of identity. This chapter explores how and where these goods are observed in the archaeological record in Pardeesville and Eckley and explores how workers did or did not adopt these new weapons in the struggle to create class identity through consumption.

The abundance of consumer goods introduced at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries include a subset of goods that effectively re-created more expensive, status laden products at a fraction of the price. While consumers would have been aware that some objects were cheap substitutions for the real thing (such as fake gemstones), consumers might have been less aware that other objects that were newly available, such as decalcomania decorated tablewares and teawares, were actually new technologies altogether that bore only passing reference to the more expensive items that they were intended to replace (in the case of decalcomania, they were intended to replace more costly transfer printed wares). This section will explore several examples of these types of new products that were recovered in the excavations at Pardeesville and Eckley, both those that intended to mimic as closely as possible status laden objects through the utilization of faux materials as well as those that represented variations of status laden objects. Towards the end of the chapter, I will also examine how households used consumptive behaviors to mimic more expensive social practices.

Eckley's first decades were largely characterized by the scarcity and reuse lifeways that characterized working class life during the early and mid-19th century. Having been solidly under the control of the company for the entirety of this period, including being subject to the company store and pay deductions for the company doctor and priest, workers and their families not only had little access to status items, but few

funds to purchase those items as well.<sup>43</sup> Mechanization and the de-skilling of production in the first decades of the 20th century enabled the large numbers of immigrants who had arrived during the final decades of the 19th century and early years of the 20th century to produce (and the purchase) a volume of goods that far surpassed domestic demand. The rise of mechanical mass production also helped to usher in new forms of home decoration. Flowerpots and knick-knacks gained cultural capital as the working class could increasingly afford items whose main function was to beautify spaces. Flowerpots, in particular, marked a uniquely middle class identity as people began to change their relationship with plants from one of survival to one of enjoyment (Tamulevich 2005:7). Another marked shift was the growth of both secular and profane, non-functional decorations, and the shelves, tables, and other furniture needed to display them. Prints of religious icons were joined by pictures of loved ones. Porcelain crucifixes and holy water fonts, items of incredible cost just 50 years previous, appeared on walls throughout the town. Carnival glass, a type of iridescent, metallic-sheened glass that could accentuate poorly lit rooms by refracting light, also appeared in the archaeological records at this time (Westmont 2017:97). In addition to purchased decorations, time intensive home-made decorations also proliferated. Whereas patchwork quilts and down pillows had once represented a significant time investment (the type of time investment not necessarily available to working class families), the increase in mechanical production of these and other household goods offered working and middle class consumers the option to obtain

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<sup>43</sup> The company store's monopoly on products available to workers' families would have been severely limited by the introduction and widespread adoption of the Sears-Roebuck Catalog by 1906 when it was heralded as the 'Consumer Bible'. However, the Eckley Post Office was located inside the company store for much of its existence, which ensured mail-based commerce would have been visible to, and literally in the hands of, the store's operators. For more information, see Winifred Gallagher, *How the Post Office Created America: A History*, (London: Penguin, 2017).

these once-scarce social markers for themselves. Determined to maintain class separation, aspirationally-middle class women found ways to invest their new-found free time. Following the mechanization of production and resulting abundance of goods that were once considered handicrafts produced in the home, “[the housewife] turned her ambition into ... a vast variety of quasi-ornamental, altogether hideous, and generally useless articles” (Coolidge 1912:11). These shifts in class-determined taste as a sign of gentility are a form of social othering that extended far beyond household decorations, including to ceramic decorations, art, and fashion (Cohen 1980). Home manuals helped guide middle class women in the appropriate use of their time as part of a middle class identity, such as in the production of embroideries, and basketry. These items would have increasingly adorned the walls of houses throughout anthracite company towns during this period. Taken together, the abundance of household decorations allowed workers to not only improve their living conditions, but to do so in a way that was personal and meaningful and served to differentiate workers who were historically nondescript and replaceable (Cromley 1991: 181-182).

The surplus of consumer items available at lowered prices due to mass production enabled working class individuals to finally be able to afford to accumulate the material trappings of a middle class lifestyle (Nye 2008:431).<sup>44</sup> The opening of consumer goods to the masses was branded as “democratic consumption,” as it increasingly enabled the ‘everyman’ American to participate in the country’s capitalist markets (Roller 2015:262). The rise of Freudian theory-based advertising that targeted consumers’ emotions and innate desire to belong combined with the proliferation of new types and styles of

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<sup>44</sup> The rise of mechanization also harmed workers’ employment.

consumer goods, as well as the growth of nationalistic immigration policies that aimed to homogenize American society, had its origins during this period (Roller 2015:302). Bric-a-brac and the domestic norms for home decorating established along the white, middle class standard during this period helped with this cultural assimilation (or, in other cases, widespread cultural exclusion) of non-white and migrant populations (Mullins 2001).

The cult of domesticity encouraged outward displays of religiosity in the home as well as decorations that promoted natural motifs, including plants. Household decorations featuring religious symbolism was also held in high regard. Here I will discuss three particular forms of household decorations that are evidenced in the archaeological record at workers' houses in Eckley and Pardeesville.

#### *Potted Plants and Flowers*

Some scholars suggest that potted plants and representations of nature inside the home were part of an extended metaphor of the 'paradise lost' perspective of American history that lamented the increasing urbanization of populations and the increasing liberalization of women's roles in society during the last half of the 19th century (Green 1983); others have suggested that it is a Biblical reference to the Garden of Eden and the need to shield children from the corrupting influences outside the home (Branca 1975, Ruether 1975). Regardless, women were expected to nurture their children in the same ways that they nurtured their plants, and writers in women's magazines routinely evoked imagery of plants in their pseudonyms, including such names as Fanny Fern, Minni Myrtle, and Lily Larkspur (Green 1983:37). Similarly, glass flower vases would have provided a way to

bring the outdoors inside and demonstrate one's devotion to the cult of domesticity's idyllic reimagining of the American home through the use of material consumption.

Terracotta plant pot sherds were recovered from all five domiciles (Table 11); unfortunately, only counts of terracotta sherds can be presented, as the fragmentary nature of these vessels precluded a MNV analysis due to the lack of identifiable rims and bases. No glass vessels could be positively identified as being plant vases, again due to the fragmentary nature of the artifacts, although one glass vessel recovered from 217 Lower St was tentatively identified as possibly being a vase.

Table 11. Terracotta Sherds by House

	217 Lower St	34 Back St	36 Back St	38 Back St	40 Back St	38/40 Back St Mixed Dump
Terracotta Sherds (N)	3	4	12	16	11	6

Interestingly, the most evidence for terracotta flower pots comes from 38 Back Street, not 217 Lower Street. However, because this is a sherd count and not an MNV analysis, this discrepancy could easily be related to differences in degrees of artifact fragmentation. More so, this data reveals that every company house examined had at least one terracotta flower pot, and therefore were enacting (whether intentionally or not) the material consumption of proper middle class American households according to the designs of the cult of domesticity.

Potted plants would have been included in the assemblage of decorative items displayed in a house's parlor (Fitts 2002). Although our excavations focused primarily on the spaces around and behind the houses instead of beneath the houses' parlors, the pieces of flowerpots recovered from the yard spaces do not preclude the possibility that

these pots were originally located in the parlor; indeed, the presence of the flowerpot sherds in the 217 Lower Street privy as well as in the 38/40 Back Street mixed house dump/privy fill indicates that these vessels were originally inside the house.

### *Knick-Knacks*

Mullins observes that “bric-a-brac was routinely produced and consumed with no absolutely clear sense of what an object or motif ‘communicated’; instead, these trinkets usually were not intended to represent anything particularly concrete” (Mullins 2001:160; Mullins 1999:165-166). This fact makes it difficult to discuss specific intentionality behind consumer choices, but still allows for discussions of the broader act of domestic consumption as well as the wider ideologies types of bric-a-brac can represent. Mullins argues that bric-a-brac was intentionally abstract to allow consumers to constantly re-imagine their identities rather than attempt to put them on display in their parlors. The themes that bric-a-brac point how, however, can help to explain the cultural threads that the items broadly indicate. Common among these cultural threads are messages that obliquely celebrate “ideologies such as white supremacy, American industrial might, Christian superiority, Western domination, and patriarchy” (Mullins 2001:164). All of these messages would have been in-line with the teachings of the cult of domesticity, and likely would have been welcome symbols within a ‘proper’ American house.

Only a few items have been successfully recovered and identified as bric-a-brac from the archaeological record; however, similar to the case with the terracotta flowerpot fragments, the locations of our excavations precluded a focus on areas where one would expect to find the many of these items. Instead, the items that were recovered largely

came from the 38/40 Back Street mixed dump or the 217 Lower Street privy excavation, as would be expected with items that had broken inside the house and were disposed of.

The knick-knack recovered from the 217 Lower St privy consists of a small, unpainted, molded porcelain figure that appears to represent a girl in a long, hooded cloak holding a basket and accompanied by a

large, four-legged animal similar in shape to a dog. It appears to indicate a shepherding scene or other similar reference to peasantry (Figure 46). Another item recovered from

the 217 Lower St privy is an unpainted, molded porcelain figure consisting of the back of a girl child's head with molded hair in ringlets and with a headband (Figure 47).

Although this item and its meaning are slightly more ambiguous due to being broken, it is possible that this, too, referenced peasantry

through its use of a child wearing a headband.

Other types of knick-knacks recovered from the company home contexts include decorative glass wares. Carnival glass shards were recovered at 34 and 38

Back Street while blue milk glass shards in a hobnail design were recovered from 40 Back Street. Both of these types of glass were made in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, including as decorative plates, bowls, glasses,



Figure 47. Porcelain knick-knack, possibly of girl and dog.



Figure 46. Porcelain knick-knack, possibly of the back of a girl's head with hair in a headband.



toothpick holders, vases, and covered dishes, although function was generally secondary to the decorative aspects of the vessel. Carnival glass will be discussed in greater depth elsewhere in this dissertation. Although the exact symbolism of these items cannot be identified, their role in the larger act of decorating a home's interior lends credence to the hypothesis that worker's homes were also subject to the pressures to conform to the standards set forth by domestic ideologies that championed a white, middle class American lifestyle.

#### Pressed Glass.

Decorative pressed glass tablewares (also known as press-molded wares) were immensely popular within the middle classes during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and began appearing in homes after 1845, although the market failed to gain a solid footing as a class-designated social standards until the 1870s and 1880s (De Cunzo 2004; Lorrain 1968). The introduction of pressed glass provided a cheap alternative to 'flint glass,' today known as lead crystal, the modern version of which had been invented in the Netherlands in the 1670s and began being manufactured at an industrial scale in England shortly thereafter (Francis 2000). The nature of lead crystal provided a material that featured a higher refractive index than normal glass (thereby making it appear more brilliant) but was also soft enough to allow for the cutting and etching of designs without breaking. English lead crystal featuring cut patterns, known today as cut glass, became world-renowned for being high quality, high-end decorative tablewares, with trans-Atlantic sales helping to fuel the product's popularity (Crossley 2003). Cut glass didn't start being produced in America until the 1770s, and even then the items produced

appeared to largely imitate European examples (Roesel 1983). In both the European- and American-made glass, the labor intensive nature of producing the item meant that cut glass remained a luxury good available only to the very wealthy. Furthermore, the fact that European-produced glass had a reputation for being of superior quality meant that owning and displaying cut glass would have served as status symbol in the US in the 18<sup>th</sup> and most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in instances where American cut glass mimicked European cut glass designs. The American cut glass industry received a major boost and began to come into its own after eight cut glass companies' products were exhibited at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, exposing throngs of new audiences to the functional possibilities and elegant forms that American cut glass had to offer. New, original, and innovative designs that were unlike their European counterparts began to be produced, and domestic demand increased. As many as 1,000 glass cutting shops were established during the 'Brilliant Period' of American cut glass, which spanned from roughly 1876 until the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; however, by 1908, only 100 such glass cutting shops remained (Roesel 1983). Much of the decline of cut glass was brought about by its stunning success – the rise in popularity of cut glass following the Centennial Exposition created a market that was quickly filled and then saturated, and as producers looked for new ways to lower costs to reach new markets and buyers, pressed glass reentered as a logical substitute. Because pressed glass vessels didn't require the time or skill to manufacture that cut glass vessels required, and the application of fire and later acid polishing could create highly refractive surfaces that resembled their cut glass counterparts, nearly identical pressed glass versions of cut glass products could be sold at a markedly lower cost (Lorrain 1968; Roesel 1983). By the 1890s and continuing into

the new century, pressed glass vessels were being cast as identical imitations of cut glass designs, while other manufacturing tricks, such as the use of pressed pieces that were then finished by hand in a shop to obscure traces of not having been fully hand cut, enabled manufactures to further lower prices (Blaszczyk 2000; see Revi 1964). American pressed and cut glass producers were further boosted by the 1890 passage of the McKinley tariff, which increased taxes on importing pressed and blown glass to 65% (Blaszczyk 2000:46). These methods, combined with an aggressive marketing campaign spearheaded by Edward Drummond Libbey of Libbey Glass Company, opened ownership of cut glass (through the opportunity to purchase pressed glass that mimicked cut glass) from being only within the purview of America's wealthy to being affordable to "members of the northern professional and managerial classes – physicians, attorneys, small businessmen, engineers, educators, government workers, and corporate bureaucrats" (Blaszczyk 2000:43). Preferences for particular brands also arose as consumers became concerned about the quality of the cut glass they were buying. A reliance on brand-names when choosing products was more than just a form of quality control, however, as brands "symbolized [the cut glass vessel's owners'] affiliation with the new economic order, embodied their wishes for material abundance, and spoke to their aspirations to distinction" (2000:44). Here we see Bernays' influence with regards to selling consumers the vision of the life they desire in action at the level of a mass-produced product.

Cut glass retained its social status during this period as being an indication of wealth due to the high cost of purchasing cut glass vessels, but the increasing encroachment of lower cost, lower quality pressed glass imitations increasingly

diminished the social prestige associated with owning cut glass. Advertisers also succeeded at turning (faux as well as real) cut glass into a cultural establishment by selling middle class consumers on the concept of the ‘crystal wedding’ and encouraging wedding guests to purchase cut glass items as gifts for the couple. Libbey, in particular, touted wedding gifts as a form of the givers’ expression of support for the marriage, and therefore “giving luxury gifts like silver or glassware demonstrated a stake in the domestic ideal” (Blaszczyk 2000:47). The presence of cut glassware, then, is more than just a statement on wealth or class status, but rather an expression of proper middle class femininity and household decoration. Cut glass production came to a swift end when the United States entered World War I and lead oxide, the necessary ingredient for manufacturing lead glass, was repurposed for the war effort. Around that same time, popular fashion sentiments turned against profusions of cut glass as a sign of taste and began to shift towards simpler aesthetics (Blaszczyk 2000).

The zenith of cut glass as a status symbol overlaps with the depositional episodes of all five households examined in this study; curiously, however, faux cut glass was only identified in the assemblage at 217 Lower Street (Figure 48). A minimum of five individual pressed glass vessels were identified from artifacts recovered at 217 Lower Street in Pardeesville; unfortunately, the only vessel form that could be identified was a lidded candy dish. The differences in depositions could be due to differences in market access as



Figure 48. Pressed glass fragments.

the residents at Eckley were still largely confined to the company store and to shops in Freeland prior to World War I. Alternatively, this difference could be identified as a deposition or curation bias because (faux) cut glass was largely kept protected and only brought out when necessary, thereby lowering the chances of such vessels being broken. A different possibility is that the families at Eckley simply could not afford, were not interested in owning, or were otherwise unaware of these particular status items.

Whatever the cause of this difference, the presence of the faux cut glass vessels at the miner's house and not at the mine laborers' houses has important implications for the expression of class identity in these different social contexts. The fact that one of the Lower Street vessels was a candy dish – a form of bric-a-brac that would have been located in a visible place within the home and therefore seen by guests – stresses the role that status-laden items served in company town domestic contexts (and provides an indication as to why the vessel might have been broken and discarded in the first place). The archaeological assemblage demonstrates that the family (and likely the woman head of house) that resided in the miner's house was concerned about the class implications of the decorative aspects of her home and responded to the class-designated trends on consumption patterns and taste in order to appoint her home with the in-vogue materials of the day, even when that meant purchasing fake, pressed glass versions of luxury cut glass items.

#### Ruby Stained Glass.

Another popular home decorating item during the Progressive Era (spanning from approximately the 1890s until the 1920s) were ruby-colored glass vessels. In middle (and

working) class contexts, these largely consisted of ruby-stained pressed glass items that were made popular as souvenirs in the 1880s because they were cheap to produce and sell. An additional draw of ruby-stained glass was its striking visible similarities to ruby-flashed glass. Ruby-flashed glass involves the application of a thin layer of red-colored molten glass onto the outside of molten colorless glass (often through dipping), which are then blown or molded together into the desired shape (Welker and Welker 1985). The thin layer of red glass can then be etched to produce designs, words, or other two-dimensional images. Originally, ruby-flashed glass was out of the average citizen's price range because the ruby color was achieved through the use of gold, thereby increasing manufacturing costs and the price of the finished product. Ruby-stained glass, which was invented in the 1840s in the Czech Republic but didn't become popular in the United States until the 1880s, was found to be a suitable substitute for ruby-flashed glass in order to mass produce the product (Kerssenbrock-Krosigk 2008; Cavo 2017). This was due to several factors, including the fact that vessels could be stained *after* they had cooled, thereby simplifying the production process; the fact that the ruby color was achieved through the application of copper instead of gold; the fact that the stain could be easily removed through scratching, meaning it could be personalized for any purpose; and the fact that ruby-stained glass could be used in conjunction with pressed glass technology, thereby drawing on the popularity of (faux) cut glass during the Brilliant Era (additionally, the combination of ruby-stained glass and pressed glass technologies allowed manufactures to create successful reproductions of cut-to-crystal wares, which were also high-end glassware products) (Welker and Welker 1985). Drawing on these benefits, businessmen and entrepreneurs created an entirely new market for their ruby-

stained glass: the souvenir glass. Souvenir glasses became a way for individuals to collect and display evidence of their vacations, which during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Progressive Era, especially, were increasingly being sold as necessary for members of the working classes as well as the middle and upper classes (Cavo 2017; Aron 2001). Ruby-stained glass pieces were sold at fairs, train depots, and resorts throughout the 1880s and until the 1920s, although particularly prized pieces often came from large events, such as World's Fairs and nationally-recognized destinations. Because ruby-stained glass frequently had the ability to be easily etched, these souvenir pieces were often custom-decorated with the names of places, people, and/or dates. In this way, owning ruby-stained glassware was not only a mimicry of upper-class wealth through the display of a replica of a luxury item, but also a claim to a middle or upper class lifestyle through the conspicuous display of items retained on vacations.

Ruby-stained glass was recovered from two residences in the anthracite company town excavations. Two pieces of a light-ruby-stained colored vessel were recovered during the privy excavations at 217 Lower Street, and one piece of ruby-stained glass was recovered directly behind the house at 36 Back Street (Figure 49). Both were from unidentified pressed glass vessels. Although these artifacts provide little information about the form or



Figure 49. Ruby stained glass.

function of these vessels, their presence attests to the anthracite region's working families' recognition of national, largely middle-class consumption trends and their willingness to engage in these patterns of purchases. Either of these could also be related

to souvenir glass purchases, as other souvenir-type artifacts have been recovered during the excavations at Eckley (Westmont 2017). Further, because ruby stained and flashed glass items were largely decorative in nature, particularly souvenir types, the choice to display these items would have connected back into women's roles as decorators of the home and her gendered responsibility to manage all aspects of the households' social status and public presentation. Ultimately, the ruby-stained glassware the decorated these houses in the anthracite region demonstrate their owners' connectedness to class and gender performances and reiterate the importance of evaluating artifacts in terms of the intersectional nature of their deeper symbolism.

#### Carnival Glass.

Carnival glass was invented in 1907 by the Fenton Art Glass Company and quickly gained widespread acclaim amongst the lower classes. Carnival glass was created through the application of metallic mineral salts in a liquid solution to pressed glass vessels immediately after the vessels were removed from their molds. This process resulted in an "oil-on-water," iridescent, multicolored surface to the vessel. The most common color for carnival glass was 'marigold,' which appears as a bright orange-gold colored surface (New England Carnival Glass Association 2018). Marigold was the cheapest and easiest carnival glass to make as the base glass for these vessels was colorless. Other base carnival glass colors (the color of the pressed glass vessel prior to the application of the metal salts), including amethyst, blue, green, red, and amber, created different colored carnival glass vessels. These were more expensive to produce, more expensive to purchase, and are more rare than their marigold counterparts. The name 'carnival glass' is



derived from the fact that the glass was occasionally given away or awarded as prizes at fairs and carnivals, although the majority of carnival glass was likely purchased by women in the process of decorating their houses.



Figure 50. Carnival glass.

We know carnival glass was present in the anthracite company towns due to the recovery of small fragments of carnival glass from 34 Back Street and 38 Back Street in Eckley (Figure 50). No carnival glass was recovered from 217 Lower Street, or 36 or 40 Back Street.

Carnival glass, like many other decorative glass types, provided a cheap alternative to a similar-looking expensive status symbol. Carnival glass was particularly sought because it resembled Tiffany and Company's blown glass products; in fact, before the term was standardized in the 1950s, carnival glass was frequently referred to as the 'poor man's Tiffany'. Advances in technology made what had previously been only available to the wealthy within the financial reach of the masses; at least one working class family on Back Street took advantage of this opportunity to own a purely decorative product that was reminiscent of the beautiful things that wealth and social class enabled the higher classes to enjoy. This form of material culture provided the working classes with ways to purchase material culture typically associated with the upper classes. Although it is impossible to say how owning and displaying imitation status-laden objects shaped (or failed to shape) workers' sense of their own identities, the greater cultural contexts of Tiffany blown glass, carnival class,

and the social pressures on women to manage the social status of the family as part of their responsibilities under the Cult of Domesticity cannot be ignored when discussing the pressure of this product in working class domestic contexts.

While families appreciated the cheap price of carnival glass, they appreciated another attribute even more: the metallic sheen of carnival glass made it high refractive. In the small houses with few windows that were available to the working classes, carnival glass helped to brighten dark corners by amplifying the limited amount of natural light present. Because wealthy families already had electricity installed by the 1920s when carnival glass reached its cultural peak, the illumination benefits of carnival glass were primarily limited to the working classes who often didn't own the places they lived or, if they did, couldn't afford to have them connected and/or wired for bright electric light. This was especially true in rural areas, such as Northeastern Pennsylvania, where infrastructure was already at a bare minimum. Therefore, the ownership and smart placement of carnival glass decorative vessels – often found in such shapes as flower vases and candy dishes – could help women, who were generally tasked with managing the house, including its decoration, outfit their homes in ways that mimicked the amenities available to the wealthy but denied to their own class, such as electricity. In this way, owning carnival glass was more than a coincidence – it was a conscious mimicry of a higher-status lifestyle as well as a practical solution to class-based deprivation.

### *Religious Items*

Another common form of household decoration that would have provided material support for women's roles as spiritual leader within the household were wall-mounted religious decorations. While bric-a-brac can be difficult to identify with certainty as promoting one ideology or symbolic message, the religious home decorations left no doubt as to their intended meaning.

Two overtly religious home decorations were recovered during the excavations at the company town homes. These consist of a porcelain holy water font recovered from the privy at 217 Lower Street as well as a gilded molded porcelain crucifix recovered from 38 Back Street. The holy water font was deposited in a stratum dating to the first decades of the 20th century, indicating that it might have been deposited by the Yannuzzi

family who moved into the house between 1910 and 1920 (Figure 51). Ralph and Victoria Y., who had emigrated from Italy in 1886 and 1908 respectively, lived in the home through at least 1940. Fitts (2002:6) notes that the presence of overt religious displays such as crucifixes or holy water fonts is "consistent with Italian



Figure 51. Holy water font.

immigrants' use of religious items to decorate parlor walls," although archaeologists have recovered holy water fonts from contexts related to Irish Catholics, as well (see Little 2007:121). Less information is available pertaining to the social context of the gilded porcelain crucifix (Figure 52). It likely also dates to the early 20th century when gilding, in particular, became cheaper and more abundant on a variety of mediums. A variety of individuals and ethnic backgrounds rotated through 38 Back Street following the turn of the century, including a man from Russo-Poland, a man born in the US, and a family from Galicia (a region that is located in modern-day Poland and Ukraine).



Figure 52. Gilded porcelain wall crucifix.

The families displaying the holy water font and the porcelain crucifix were Catholic, which was the most common religious denomination for workers in the anthracite region. Managers and mine owners, on the other hand, tended to subscribe to Protestant denominations. In the anthracite region, Catholic churches, in particular, served as a form of ethnic solidarity and community. Separate Catholic churches were available for immigrants from different countries and, in some cases, even cultural regions within countries, where mass was conducted in their own language and according to their own Old World customs. Therefore, although these religious artifacts today do not denote a particular church or variation of Catholicism, their presence in specific

homes would have had specific ethnic connotations. In an unexpected twist, the cult of domesticity's dual charges of overt religiosity and American identity came into direct conflict as the demonstration of religious identity only served to strengthen their ethnic identities as well.

### *Home Decoration Discussion*

The presence of such decorative items as flower pots, knick-knacks, and religious iconography provides clues as to the decorative themes that working families displayed in their houses. While the intentionality behind the selection of these items is lost and might have been unknown or undefined even to the items' owners or purchasers (see Mullins 2001), the fact that these items are all part of the larger movement within the Victorian era and the cult of domesticity ideologies to promote cultural themes related to 'proper' American homes indicates the reach and influence of mainstream cultural norms on migrant families in rural, industrial contexts. Although commonly overlooked at least in part because of their ambiguous meanings, bric-a-brac can provide useful hints about what aspects of American cultural mythos families chose to represent within their home. The presence of porcelain figurines displaying pastoral imagery are consistent with common cultural representations of peasantry and evocative of a pre-industrial past (Mullins 2001:163). Whether the deeper symbolism of these items is to communicate a yearning for a pre-industrial lifestyle while surrounded by the machines of industry, or representative of nostalgia for the agrarian past that many migrants left behind in Europe, or an undertone of white purity, innocence, and cultural supremacy, or something else entirely remains a mystery; however, the households' participation in the collection and

display of bric-a-brac places them squarely within the bounds of acceptable gendered, ethnic, and class norms for the period.

The interpretations of the bric-a-brac as supporting an attempt at conforming to the mainstream definitions of how a house should be decorated (which also coincided with the teachings of the cult of domesticity) are further strengthened by the recovery of terracotta flower pots at every house analyzed. Potted plants and flower vases were also valued by the cult of domesticity for their connections to nature and Biblical teachings.

The only household decoration recovered during this analyses that defies the cult of domesticity does so almost on accident. In an ironic twist, the cult of domesticity's pedestalling of religious identity and celebration of enacted religious identity served to undermine its dual goal of assimilating migrants into the 'norms' of American cultural identity due to the anthracite region's strong links between religion and ethnicity. In some ways, women's participation in the cult of domesticity, an American ideology, might have served the very identities that separated her from her American-born neighbors.

### Conclusion

Annie Falatko's ability to continue her lifestyle following her husband's untimely death is not only a testament to Annie herself, but also to the managerial experience that Annie's status as a wife and mother had provided. Although the cult of domesticity thrived on portraying women as weak-willed and inferior and cultivated young women to be submissive and delicate, the realities of company town and industrial life demanded more. Women like Annie straddled the dual demands of social constructions of femininity with their actual responsibilities as members of the working community. The

artifacts discussed here represent the daily choices that women in anthracite company towns were forced to make with regards to maintaining this balance.

These findings presented here indicate that even households that were at an economic disadvantage were still attempting to follow the mainstream pronouncements of what a standard middle class household should look like. In this instance, despite the fact that the socially prescribed behaviors were at odds with the economic and physical realities of working class life, families chose to follow the socially prescribed behaviors (in this case, ceramic consumption patterns and home decorations). Societal pressures related to the cult of domesticity manifested in a variety of ways within the material trappings of the home, ranging from the paste types and decorations of ceramic dishes to porcelain religious wall hangings and terracotta flower pots.

It is impossible to know whether the families at Pardeesville and Eckley chose to adorn their parlors and dining tables with the trends and fashions of the time due to a conscious choice based on their knowledge of society's expectations of middle class women or whether the larger consumer market and other forms of cultural pressure coopted women into taking part in identity-building and defining consumption patterns without their express knowledge of the implications of what they were participating in. However, the degrees of obedience to the ideology indicate that some women, such as those living at 40 Back Street and 217 Lower Street, had a better grasp of or desire to abide by the tenets of the cult of domesticity and actively attempted to conform to its teachings.

This discussion of home representations and home decorations has also highlighted the fact that analyses of gender and class cannot be extricated from one

another. Rather, a woman's management of her home was an outgrowth of a multitude of pressures relating to gender performance, class maintenance, ethnic tradition, and religiosity. Although archaeologists often speak of homes in terms of male breadwinners or the family unit as a whole, the items presented in this chapter were under the near-sole control of women and demonstrate a uniquely gendered perspective on women's roles in industrial domestic contexts. These artifacts demonstrate the calculated decisions women were tasked with managing as it related to the public identities of their homes and families. Seemingly inconsequential decisions about house plants and teawares were actually serious conversations about consumption as an expression of a multitude of identities.

The presence of these objects and their specific manipulation of larger social signals, such as the adoption of pressed glass to imitate cut glass, reveals two facts about the social conditions in Northeastern Pennsylvania: firstly, families were aware that these specific items were regarded as luxury items, meaning that their ownership was desirable because it was otherwise largely limited to those with the economic means to purchase them, thereby reifying the wealth-class designation; and secondly, that the ownership of fake versions of these items would potentially raise the social status of the household relative to their neighbors. These facts demonstrate not only market access, but access to cultural institutions, such as media and popular culture, that then transmitted these value systems to the masses. Because status and class negotiations are in constant flux as national and international markets respond to consumer choice and consumers in turn respond to objects' ascribed values and public perceptions, the adoption of these symbolic value systems demonstrates Northeastern Pennsylvanian families' implicit



acceptance of these structures through their participation in the commodities fashion cycle. Even if this participation was unintentional, or the result of peer-pressure or shop keeper choices, the choice to purchase these specific goods and use them in the contextually-appropriate settings provides evidence that even working class, largely first and second generation migrations, and primarily women, were aware and engaged with national trends. This demonstrates that within one to two generations, migrants were assimilating culturally into American society. The image of company towns as isolated, marginal communities (see Lewis 1999), especially after the turn of the 20th century, needs to be re-evaluated in the light of this new evidence.

In addition to proving that migrant working class populations were connected to and participating in national cultural trends, the presence of these fake status symbols in the domestic contexts at Eckley and Pardeesville also provides insights as to how other aspects of identity could be inadvertently impacts through changes in one form of identity. The decorative glass vessels and decorated ceramic dishes, while status items in themselves, were also props associated with women's middle class gender performance. Although these items are status items, it is only through their correct use (e.g. displayed in the appropriate settings, such as in the parlor for decorative glass and in meal or tea hosting for the decorated dishes, both actions that allow carefully managed, semi-public displays of wealth and ownership of expensive goods) that families would have been able to benefit from the social aspects of these commodities. The correct social deployment and use of these objects, though, relied on women. The domestic sphere, including the selection of house decorations and dishes, was a woman's duty within the middle class cultural cannon and the Cult of Domesticity, which these objects belonged to. As women

would have been responsible for these purchasing decisions, the ownership and use of these particular items is both an expression of middle class identity and an expression of a proper feminine identity. In this instance, the women's identity and the middle class identity cannot be extricated from each other, highlighting the contribution that an intersectional identity approach to evaluating material culture can offer.

The presence of small plastic objects is often ignored or entirely discarded within historical archaeology. This work helps to place these and other items within a larger context of cultural exchange, connectedness, and social sea-change. These fake status items help to highlight the obstacles and solution to the age-old problem of social hierarchy and mobility. Additionally, these types of object demonstrate instances of agency by working class families who used a variety of methods, including faux middle class household decorations and personal items, in order to negotiate their place within the social hierarchy – both to their neighbors as well as to themselves.

## Chapter 5. Household Spatial Organization

“A history of American homes is necessarily a history of American life” -Pickering  
1951:4

### Introduction

The home and hearth have long symbolized the center of family life and that trope holds true in the context of the company town. Mulrooney’s work has demonstrated that workers’ source of self-identify was tied to the identities formed at home – not those imposed upon them at work. Bordieu’s idea of habitus and embodied and objectified capital, however, tells us that people’s identities are manifested through physical actions and the accumulation of material culture. This section will focus on the ways that the identities of residents were transmitted onto the built environment through the modifications families made to their houses as well as the ways they organized and labeled the spaces provided to them by the company.

A home is a building, but in the company town context, it is a building imbued with irreconcilably contradictory meanings: managerial control and worker agency; regulated uniformity and outlets for individuality; Americanization and ethnic perpetuity. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the social meaning of the home, following massive societal shifts in other social venues, changed rapidly. Victorian domestic ideals were replaced by catalogs of consumable home decorations and a greater emphasis on a uniquely ‘American’ vernacular. Rather than simply a collection of things, “the house and its furnishings were icons of cherished ways of life, and tools for change... Workers and especially immigrants... were interested in the material goods that American

capitalism offered, but they wished to use them to create in their homes environments evocative of comfort and success as defined by their own experience and by values often forged in Europe” (Upton and Vlach 1986:261). In the context of company towns, the home became the space where Old World and New World ideals collided, integrated, and evolved. Progressive Era reformers’ focus on the home as the locus of social change indicates the deep importance of this space; therefore, studying the home as a means of better understanding the ways that workers in company towns defined themselves and their relationship to society provides tremendous opportunities for unique and thoughtful insights (Cohen 1980).

However, companies’ primary focus was always on profit. Because company towns were intended to last only as long as mining operations were being carried out – a time frame that was nearly impossible to determine for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – company house maintenance was not a priority and residences were not invested in. Although the company was responsible for maintaining these residences, Eckley’s 1915 insurance document indicates that the company was aware of many structural deficiencies with the houses, including crack and rotted clapboard, rusted and leaking rooves, and broken window lights, but listed individual residences as “serving its purpose” did not remedy the situation (Coughlin et al. 1915: 112-472, for specific example, see 393). Contemporaneous reports from other company towns in the region suggest that although engineers acknowledged the important of making repairs to houses to improve the quality of life for the residents, cheaper alternatives to much needed maintenance were also the proposed as they “could be made to pass a little while longer” (quoted in Magnusson 1920:103). Within these circumstances families elected to make

material changes to their domestic environment – potentially to express agency in a world where worker agency was viewed as a threat. This section will explore those material changes and discuss the potential motivations behind those decisions.

Because the home was traditionally the domain of women, this section will begin with a discussion of how women’s control over the house was established, regulated, and expressed, including how the domestic sphere and its associated gender roles was also used to define women. I will then discuss what the company home consisted of in Eckley and Pardeesville, followed by examinations of infrastructure, room function, exteriors, additions, walls, and ceilings over time and how these aspects of the home helped to shape and express workers’ identities.

### *Gender in the Home*

As it did in many fields, gender arose quickly within vernacular architecture as a rich form of analysis and information during the late 1980s and early 1990s as women scholars, in particular, noticed that “the role of women in the design, construction, and use of vernacular architecture is little understood” (Bernstein and Torma 1991: 64; see McMurry 1989; Kwolek-Folland 1995). The recognition that ‘separate spheres’ is not a universally useful method of analysis, in part because of its reliance on a 19th century white middle class identity, has helped to draw more nuance that illuminates the diverse, at times complimentary and at times contested, roles of multiple ‘spheres’, including the contributions of men, women, and children to the household as a whole (Kwolek-Folland 1995: 5; McMurry 1989). By focusing on the connection between the house structure and the social functions of the house – in particular, the social functions as they relate to the

social category of gender – I can begin to discuss worker houses from a gendered perspective that more equitably addresses the roles of everyone who lived, worked, and assigned meaning to these homes.

Before delving into the ways that different genders used and experienced domestic spaces differently, it is important to understand how different genders related to each other within the boundaries of the family unit. A gendered analysis of the home provides a platform to understand how genders experience and relate to the space within the home differently. Women's relationship to the home and their role in it changed dramatically over the period of industrialization in the anthracite region. The transition from agricultural home-based production to industrial workplace-based production, which ushered in a new set of challenges with regards to home management and child rearing, coupled with the increasing urbanization of the East Coast of the country and the establishment of a 'middle class', created a new era in domestic and economic gender relations within American families at all social strata (Goldin 1994). This section provides a historical context from which to understand the role gender norms played in the daily lives of workers.

Although Eckley was built during the early phase of anthracite industrialization when the area was still categorized as a wilderness, home manuals dictating the proper layout of kitchens and decorating aesthetics were already prevalent in American society. Social reformers originating from a religious perspective had begun peddling a new type of gender system, one in which "women would accept a position submissive to men in the political arena, but within the home and the schools would be the dominant molders of morality," as early as the 1830s (Van Why 1975: 6). In this new perspective, today

known as the Cult of Domesticity, women were responsible for the maintenance of the home, including its social upkeep, economic provisioning, and the wellbeing of the family (Welter 1966).

Despite the fact that these treatises were written by middle and upper class women for other women in that social faction, the working classes were quick to adopt the physical and social trappings of class mobility – even if they lacked the economic capacity to fulfill that identity (Halttunen 1982). As marriage occurred at an early age, especially amongst the immigrant community, it meant that women’s short childhoods were further shortened by the need to prepare them to manage the gendered household responsibilities that would define the rest of their lives.<sup>45</sup> However, attempting to conform to these expectations could provide a whole host of obstacles for working class families. Economic constraints were just one aspect of a system that sought to exclude large swathes of the population – the advice authors had was often at odds with the cultural traditions of many immigrant communities or entirely unattainable as a working model of domesticity.

Social reformers’ messages and home manual publications gained momentum as time continued. The writings of Beecher (1873), Abell (1855), and Beecher and Stowe (1869) were highly influential within American society during the 1840s and 1850s. Etiquette books from the 1850s and 1860s re-iterated religious doctrine about the hierarchy of the home and a woman’s duty to obey her husband; a woman’s interests were thus defined as a “kitchen-clothing-children-church” routine of responsibilities

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<sup>45</sup> A report from 1910 states that in the anthracite region, “Girls marry before the age of 16 as a rule, especially among the Italians” (Ely 1910: 141); the national average for women’s age at first marriage in 1910 was 26.1 years (United States Census Bureau 2004)

(Coolidge 1912: 38). These writings imagined a domestic sphere in which women were “the center flower, the main-spring, the pendulum that keeps all the delicate machinery in regular motion... the complicated and often perplexing duties move on, and the comfort for her family is provided, even at the expense of many an exhausted nerve” (Abell 1855:9). Even amongst a middle class audience, the ability to maintain ‘regular motion’ in a domestic setting hinged on factors that were largely outside of women’s control, such as men’s employment, strikes, evictions, and the availability of income and support from means other than the company.

Although the fundamental messages remained the same, gendered prescriptive literature for women’s duties in the house began to shift in subtle ways at the turn of the century. Home manuals and etiquette books begin to include sections that encouraged men to think of their wives as partners, with one instructing men to, “consult your wife also in your business affairs. A woman’s intuitions often exceed a man’s reasoning powers” (Eyebright 1910:34). These books even address the earlier arrangement of men’s total control by reasoning that, “custom entitles you to be considered the ‘lord and master’ over your home. But don’t assume the *master* and forget the *lord*. And bear in mind that forbearance, kindness, generosity and integrity belong to the lordly attributes of man” (Eyebright 1910:28, emphasis in original). In matters related to the home, these books suggest that men entrust the household and its economic wellbeing to their wives, including instructing men that the, “husband should at the commencement of his married life tell his wife, as nearly as possible, the expected amount of his income; and together they should plan for its disbursement, in the most satisfactory manner to both” as well as, “the internal movements of the house belong *entirely* to the wife, and no good ever



resulted from unnecessary interference” (Eyebright 1910:13, 16, emphasis in original). If these etiquette manuals are read as the gold standard for society, we can see that the model relationship between a husband and wife has shifted substantially by the first decade of the new century, but is not quite a C-change between old and new attitudes: in short, women were universally expected to maintain order over the household, but were gaining progressively more social (if not legal) control over the operations taking place within the home. It is under this changing ideology of women’s proper place and role in American society that my discussion of the company town houses in Eckley and Pardeesville and their change over time will take place.

### Eckley

Before delving into the meanings imbued into houses by management and by workers, it is important to understand what the workers’ housing stock at Eckley included. Eckley’s worker housing stock consisted of five primary types: 1½ story double house (A), small 2 story front gable double house (B), large 2 story side gable double house (C), small 2½ story double house (D), large 2½ story double house (E), and the single family house (F). Each of these house types will now be examined.

(A) The 1½ story double house featured two units, each consisting of two first floor rooms with a sleeping loft under the roof.<sup>46</sup> Built in a saltbox style and measuring 20 by 29 ft, the front room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor was significantly larger than the rear lean-to room. The front room featured a narrow, enclosed staircase used to reach the loft. This

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<sup>46</sup> A half room is described as a room located beneath a shed roof in which one end of the room is less than 4’ tall. For more information, see Leifur Magnusson, “Employers’ Housing in the United States,” *Monthly Labor Review* 5 (1917), 879.

house type had no basement, no plaster and lathe, and no additional insulative properties beyond the board and batten walls. The lean-to was outfitted with a stove pipe on the party wall that traveled up through the loft to reach a stove chimney that pierced the center of the roof. This stove and pipe would have been the only source of heat for the house. These houses were only found on Back Street.

(B) The next workers' house style at Eckley is the small two story house type. None of these houses are extant today, although they were formerly located on the west end of Back Street. These divided American Four Square-style double houses measured 30 by 31 ft and featured a side gable roof. Few details about the interior of these houses remain, although it likely had a stove chimney that pierced the center of the roof with an internally exposed stove pipe that provided heat to some interior rooms. By 1915, rooms on the first floor and some second floor rooms had plastered walls, although the ceilings consisted of exposed joists and upstairs flooring. These homes had basements although it is unknown whether they were full or partial.

(C) The next house type is the large 2 story house type. These houses are located on Main Street. They are characterized as 24 by 32 ft side gable divided American Four Square-style double houses with wainscoting and plaster and lathe on the first floor and plaster and lathe on the second floor. These houses had full basements.

(D) The next house type is the small 2 ½ story houses located on Main Street. These would have been the largest double houses in the town until the 1870s. The houses are 25 x 37 ft divided American Four Square-style with a sleeping loft in the attic. These houses had full basements as well as plastered walls and ceilings on the first and second floors by 1915.

(E) Today, the largest of the double house types are the large 2 ½ story homes located on Main Street. These were among the last houses built at Eckley and date to John Leisenring's expansion of operations at Eckley in the mid-1870s. These houses are 33 by 36 ft divided American Four Square-style with a sleeping loft in the attic. These houses were also built with a lean-to kitchen attached and originally had two stove chimneys: one in the center of the building piercing the roof peak, which would have supplied heat to the rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the main house block in both residences<sup>47</sup>, and one chimney located in to lean-to to vent the cook stove. This house was built with wainscoting and plaster and lathe on the first floor main house block and plaster and lathe in the lean-to as well as the second floor bedrooms (but not in the space above to lean to or in the sleeping loft). These houses also had full basements under the main house block.

(F) The final worker house type and only single family worker house type in Eckley are the 17 by 40 ft 2 story front gable clapboard sided single family houses.<sup>48</sup> These featured a main house block with an attached lean-to that was likely part of the original construction of the house.

The smallest houses were rented to the residents with the poorest paying jobs, including those who worked inside the breaker as well as inside and outside laborers. The 2 story houses were rented primarily to laborers, while the 2 ½ story houses were rented

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<sup>47</sup> These houses each had a stove chimney routed into a shared wall between the front and rear rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and in a shared wall between the front bedroom and the hallway on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, and then was exposed in the sleeping loft.

<sup>48</sup> As originally constructed, the single dwellings measured 17 by 40 ft; however, additions were added prior to the 1915 insurance evaluation, so some buildings are reported as being larger in that document.

to miners. The single family houses were reserved for the families of superintendents and mine foremen. This geographically interpreted social hierarchy is not limited to Eckley and was identified as one of the key criteria of Pennsylvania coal company towns.

(Mulrooney 1989:117.)

Different phases within Eckley's history saw different types of modifications become popular and begin to be adopted by tenants across each of these six house types. The next section will discuss the houses at Pardeesville, followed by an exploration of the social and/or technological reasons behind some of the changes seen within worker housing at Eckley.

### *Pardeesville*

Pardeesville had significantly less diversity in architectural differentiation than Eckley simply due to being a satellite company town in conjunction with its smaller size; however, even in this secondary context, the Pardee Brothers Coal Company was still interested in imposing hierarchies on the landscape. The company-built workers' houses came in one form: a 2 story side gable divided American Four Square-style double house that measured approximately 31 by 25 ft with paired end stove chimneys. These houses had full basements and its staircases were mirrored across the center party wall, but otherwise very little information about their original configuration exists. Although these houses were smaller than the most impressive workers' houses at Eckley, these houses at Pardeesville represented the highest-status housing available to workers in the town. The only other housing available in Pardeesville were the worker-built houses in the Italian village area. Because the houses in the Italian Village were built individually according to

the vision of the person who built it, there is no over-arching style or common feature within these houses. Shape, size, number of stories, and finishes varied widely, although Hambidge indicates that the houses were regularized by their irregularity: the houses were uniformly built of discarded mine refuse, which led many of the houses to be sided with and constructed from dynamite box ends and scrap wood (1898:824-825). Because little information is available about houses in this section, no discussion of the houses in the Italian Village will be presented here.

### Analysis

Now that the housing in the towns has been discussed and characterized, I will examine how the house itself impacted identity. Although the house lot was malleable in ways that allowed workers to express themselves and organized their lives in ways that they chose, the house block had significantly fewer options for conveying individuality and identity through the built environment – particularly during the 19th century. In particular, my discussion will focus on the ways that companies used amenities within these houses to solidify its social hierarchy, the ways that tenants' classifications of the function of rooms within the house changed over time in connection to changing ideas of what the 'modern' American home included, and finally ending with a discussion of the ways that tenants physically changed their houses to more appropriately address their desires and dreams.

### *Room Function*

When the houses at Eckley were constructed, their design was infused with the ideals of industry: efficiency, speediness, and regularity. However, these designs were often at

odds with the needs and desires of the tenants and workers. Through time, workers made changes including the construction of additions, subdivision of rooms, and finishing of spaces in order to achieve their vision for their domestic spaces. As new social movements and technological improvements offered consumers the opportunity to reshape their homes to reflect the newest trends in home science, workers and their families individually chose which ideals to adopt and which to bypass – demonstrating agency over their houses.

Built prior to the reform efforts of the early 20th century, company houses featured rooms that were meant to serve several purposes (Hoagland 2010; Hubka 1986). The increase in the number of rooms in houses when moving from the those dwellings belonging to the lowest paid (three rooms) to those belonging to the highest paid (five rooms) workers reflects on the small-scale a class-based lesson within larger society: the more ‘well-to-do’ the family, the more clarified the rooms’ functions became and, therefore, an increase “in the number of rooms and in the amount of circulation space” (Cromley 1991:178). The number of single-function rooms a house had served as an indicator of wealth and class standing.

While this housing arrangement created uniform properties with a graduated scale of space and amenities that made organizing people geographically within the town’s hierarchy simple, the company’s plans did not align with those of the workers. The company’s standards for domestic space were heavily colored by racism, with architects relying on class and racial stereotypes in order to avoid additional costs. One such architect, Leslie Allen, suggested in his 1917 book on the subject that “even if cellars, closets, and bathtubs were provided, unskilled workers like miners would not be able to

afford them” and that “many of the workingmen whose homes we wish to build have come from countries where four walls and a roof are considered sufficient shelter from the elements to make a home ... it is not necessary that this home be furnished with all the conveniences and appurtenances that are considered necessary in the American home” (Allen 1917:14). While these houses did have four walls and a roof, they lacked other important and class-indicated spaces, such as spaces for leisure, storage, or even home-based production. At Eckley, workers were allowed to manipulate the interior layout of their houses to an extent, but few houses had additions that would have enabled a true increase in space through the early 20th century.

As tastes continued to shift during the 20th century in favor of larger houses that could accommodate individual bedrooms and single purpose spaces, such as living rooms and dining rooms, and the rise of the American suburb increasingly drew families away from crowded urban area, the old company houses in the coal region were adapted to a suburban look and feel (Vicino 2013:44; Figure 53). However, properties that could not be adapted, such as the three room saltbox houses on Back Street, became increasingly outmoded and unnecessary. In the 1940s, two-thirds of Back Street was

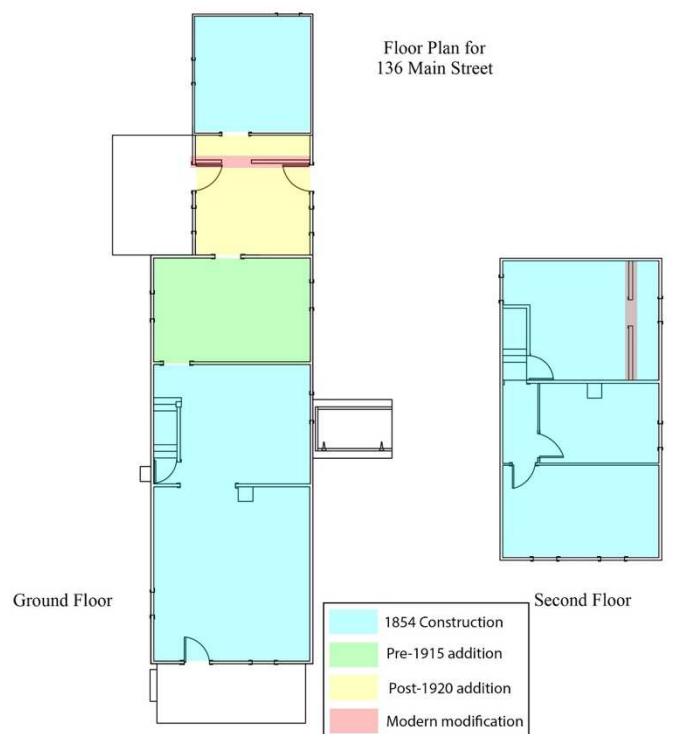


Figure 53. 2017 Schematic of 136 Main Street, Eckley, illustrating construction phases. Provided by author.

stripped mined, taking with it houses that were already largely abandoned and falling into disrepair (Aerial Luzerne County, 6 May 1959, Penn Pilot, Penn State University, University Park). In other instances, common walls in a double house were removed in order to combine the two houses, creating one large dwelling with an abundance of bedrooms and formal gathering spaces (Figure 54). The combination of destruction and combination, driven in large part by diminishing economic prospects in the region, saw this once-prosperous patch town of 1500 residents in 1870 as home to only 200 in 1970 (Albert E. Peters Associates 1972; United States Census Bureau 1870).

#### Bathrooms.

One of the most important rooms in the house wasn't installed in most company town houses until after the end of World War II. The installation of the bathroom was delayed for many logistical and infrastructural reasons, including concerns about the sanitary disposal of waste. However, bathrooms were important not only for hygiene and sanitation purposes, but also as a signal of progress and wealth in American culture as a

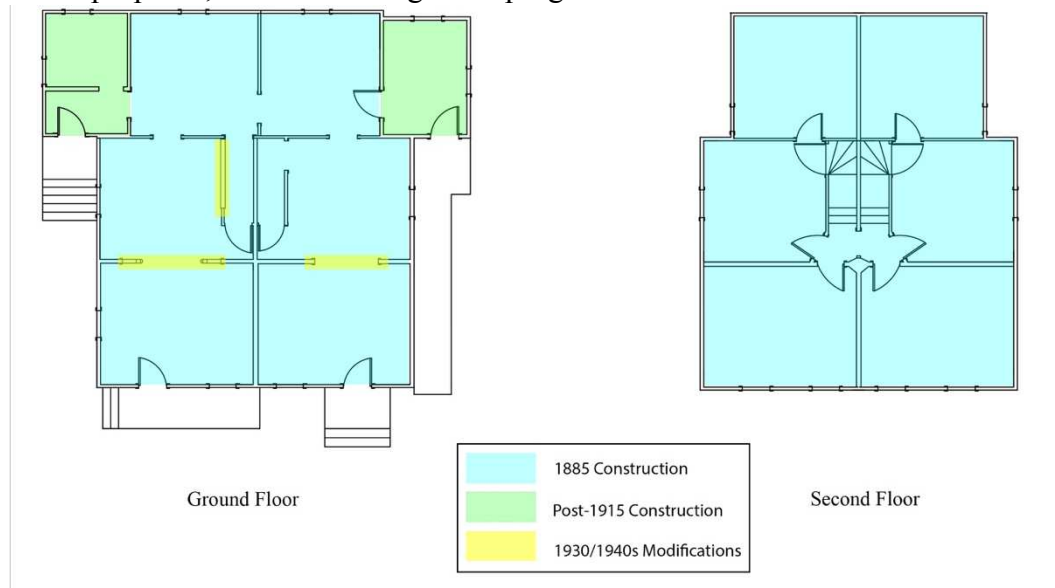


Figure 54. 2017 Schematic of 117/119 Main Street, Eckley, illustrating construction phases. Provided by author.



whole. For example, although the first bathroom at Eckley (consisting of a bathtub with running water in a dedicated room, but no toilet) was present by 1915 and marked the beginnings of modern hygienic amenities, it would be decades into the post-war period before one of the embodiments of the middle class, the ‘three fixture bathroom,’ became standard in workers’ houses across Eckley (Hoagland 2010:2).<sup>49</sup> This discrepancy reveals some of the intra-town variation that was typical of former company houses across the anthracite region. Improvements were often left to the discretion of the then-tenants, leading to differential access to amenities within the company house population.

#### Closets.

A change made in several company homes was the installation of closets. Although the modern idea of a closet dates back to the 1840s, closets in the company homes in Eckley were not installed until well after the turn of the century, and possibly not until World War II. Allen’s 1917 Industrial Housing guide had recommended closets be installed in homes for ‘American’ workers, but stated that they were unnecessary – and potentially harmful – if supplied to “unskilled workmen” (Allen 1917:11). The modern closet, referring to a wall cavity adjacent to the room for which the closet would be storing items, replaced the older idea of a closet as a storage place with particular purposes – studies, galleries, dressing rooms, and libraries all served as types of closets (Bobker 2015:37; Mattern 2017). Whereas historical closets, such as galleries and dressing rooms, were often located at the interior of the house, the modern closet was built with the express purpose of serving another, more proper room. The purpose of this type of closet

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<sup>49</sup> It’s also important to note that even today, several of the houses at Eckley still do not have three fixture bathrooms.

was to secret away excess items owned by the residents. The ability to hide ‘stuff’ allowed “householders [to] relish in consumption and enjoy their material possessions, while also moderating the objects’ display and maintaining a semblance of frugality and moral propriety” (Mattern 2017: para. 9). As the pace of domestic consumption reached a fever-pitch in the years following World War II, closets became a strategy for hiding the clutter of material goods. Home manuals encouraged the storage of family mementos and nostalgia in closets, creating what one scholar refers to as “bureaucratic storage” (Spigel 2012:569). With these implications of morality and consumption, it is important to understand closets through their individual contexts.

An analysis of architectural modifications at Eckley revealed closets had been added primarily in three locations: bedrooms, living rooms, and hyphens stretching between the summer kitchen and the modern kitchen; however, none of the houses assessed had more than one closet. These spaces generally presented as long, narrow spaces that were separated from the room with curtains or home-made doors and partitioned via a false wall of light wood frame and particle board. The closets spanned the entirety of one wall of the room and their construction revealed that they had been added overtop of existing flooring, wall and ceiling treatments, and, if present, electrical systems. The location of closets in these three locations aligns with modern ideas of where closets and storage should be located. Their locations also hint at the types of consumption different tenants prioritized: personal clothing in the bedroom closet; household goods in the living room closet; and food consumption or preparation goods in the summer kitchen hyphen closet.

## Open Floor Plan.

The final interior modification to discuss is the adaptation of company houses to conform to the stylistic trends occurring in the rest of the country. Although the Victorian period had advocated a dividing of houses into discrete spaces with treatments that reflected the rooms' relative social importance, the 1950s and 1960s saw a movement towards more open floor plans that encouraged movement throughout the house (Leavitt 2002:177). Tenants responded accordingly, widening doorways between rooms, removing doors, and transforming boxed staircases into open stairways. The open floor plan became a hallmark of the mid-century modern style house and was, at the time, a revelation in home architecture. When the first model home featuring an open floorplan was introduced in 1953, it became the ideal of a middle class America that adored its "flexibility in room planning" and greater potential for "family-oriented activities" (Leavitt 2002:177). Open plans were revered for their ability to share light between several rooms and improve the flow of foot traffic within the home. Unfortunately, the widening of doorways to achieve an open plan configuration further compromised the upright framing members maintaining the houses' vertical structural integrity: the circa 1854 vertical planks of the board and batten walls. Whether families were unaware of the physical dangers associated with removing section of wall of, as tenants and not homeowners, simply did not care, the trend rocks Eckley's Main Street, with at least 50% of residences being modified in this way.

### *Additions*

Coal companies' primary concerns were, first and foremost, profit, and the management and operation of company towns exemplifies this value system. As company property, the company had the ability to create and enforce rules about what could and could not be done to the houses. Although specific tenant guidelines from Eckley and Pardeesville have long since disappeared, the use of company towns to further machinations of corporate power, control, and hierarchy has been recognized as a hallmark of company towns nationwide (Mulrooney 1989:1; Methenny 2007:6). The uniformity and regularity of the built environment was a tenant of corporate paternalism that maintained prominence in industrial towns until the Progressive Era (Francaviglia 1997:123). Throughout Pennsylvania's coal fields, companies used a standard set of methods for maintaining uniformity within the housing stock, including retaining carpenters to conduct repairs on houses, providing tenants with lime to whitewash their fences and foundations, and providing routine exterior maintenance (such as painting) themselves (Mulrooney 1981: 41). Company documents indicate that these practices were utilized during Eckley's early years (SWCR #399, s.7, b.9, m.r. 1). Unfortunately, these types of records were not available for Pardeesville, although Pardee Brothers likely has a similar arrangement as this type of management style was typical throughout the coal industry. Maintaining the cost efficiency of company housing relied upon the homogeneity of the housing stock.

Although the company provided families with a three to five room dwelling, workers often took it upon themselves to expand, modify, re-define, and circumvent the company's intended use of these structures. Built prior to the reform efforts of the early

20th century, company houses featured rooms that were meant to serve several purposes (Hoagland 2010:2). The increase in the number of rooms in houses when moving from those dwellings belonging to the lowest paid (three rooms) to those belonging to the highest paid (five rooms) workers reflects on the small-scale a class-based reflection of larger society: the more ‘well-to-do’ the family, the more clarified the rooms’ functions became and, therefore, an increase “in the number of rooms and in the amount of circulation space” (Cromley 1991:178). The number of single-function rooms a house had served as an indicator of wealth and class standing (1991:181).

Additions expanded the amount of much-needed interior space and could further workers’ aspirations of acquiring middle class amenities and, by extension, status, such as through the construction of additions that housed dining rooms or bathrooms (Hoagland 2010:2). However, because additions did not follow standard housing conventions, each family utilized their addition to suit their own needs, and subsequent tenants may have deviated from a room’s original purpose, it is nearly impossible to state the function of rooms whose functions have not been recorded historically. Because of the variation and subjectivity inherent in discussing room function in vernacular dwellings, focusing on the overall problem solved through the construction of the addition (such as a need for more space, or a need for more individual rooms) is likely more important and more accurate than focusing on specific room types that might have been built. It is also important to note that while documents show the existence of additions, these additions were small, usually simple lean-to type structures, not the extended series of additions visible on houses at Eckley today.

Spaces to house boarders, carry out important religious ceremonies, and store items became important to residents, and the modifications to the layout of the houses reflect this. The limited space available to workers, especially those with the lowest paying positions who were in most need of additional income, was cited as a well-known concern as early as 1910. A sociological survey of living conditions in anthracite coal communities published in that year noted that the size of the houses often meant that adult male workers, both family members and boarders, were forced to bathe “in the kitchen in the presence of women and children” during the winter months due to the lack of space. Researchers noted that “this lack of privacy is demoralizing” but, writ large, “the three factors of drink, crowding, and the daily bath unite to make the standard of [moral] purity in the coal fields admittedly a low one” (MacLean 1910:139).

The 1910 report also cited over-crowding of workers’ houses as a constant problem. The author found that “the newly arrived immigrant is likely to come without his family, so he boards with some one of his own race [ethnicity], as many as twenty or thirty men crowding into a four-room house with a man and his wife and family” (MacLean 1910:139). Keeping boarders created a symbiotic relationship between management and tenants: boarders provided additional income for families living in the town while simultaneously reducing costs for the company by not lodging men indefinitely in the town’s hotel and foregoing the construction of additional houses. The largest number of boarders in a single household in Eckley’s census records is 14 in 1860, indicating that Eckley suffered from these crowding problems, too (United States Census Records 1860). MacLean observes that, in these instances, “three rooms, or perhaps four, are used as bedrooms, leaving only a lean-to to serve as kitchen and living

room” (MacLean 1910:133). This indicates that tenants were forced to redefine room functions in order to accommodate their additional financial needs. The multi-functionality of space was a clear violation of Victorian standards of separate rooms with discrete uses, further alienating working families from the middle-class living standards identified as belonging to ‘American’ houses through structural and financial barriers (Allen 1917:11).

The period is also marked by an increase in self-determination by workers. Company correspondence indicates that workers were increasingly modifying their homes in significant ways without the permission of the corporate landlords. The increasing emphasis on consumer choice coupled with the increasing distance between Eckley residents and their landlords led tenants to intensify the rate of modifications to their houses (SWCR #399, 23:4:25). Datable material culture such as newspaper used as insulation in addition walls indicates that a host of new additions were built around this time, likely by the residents themselves rather than by company carpenters and laborers (Wesolowsky 1996:32). This again illustrates how the relationship between employers and employees continued to evolve throughout the town’s life.

Although the company had added small, typically one-room additions on to some company houses prior to 1920, the 1930s saw an explosion in the construction of additions, this time likely built by tenants themselves, in every type of house all across town (Aerial Luzerne County, 31 October 1938, Penn Pilot, Penn State University, University Park; Aerial Luzerne County, 2 July 1939, Penn Pilot, Penn State University, University Park). Older, outdated, or failing additions were removed and replaced with new structures that could take advantage of the houses’ new water and electric

connections (Penn Pilot 59:5:6; Coughlin et al. 1915:112-472).<sup>50</sup> While the changes were able to facilitate new opportunities in home conveniences, the construction of additions also strengthened the workers' growing middle class identity. The constructions of new rooms enabled families to begin separating public and private functions within the house in accordance with social mores of the time.

As manufacturing changes elicited new developments inside the houses, the other structures on the house lots continued to evolve, too. Larger additions in the rear of homes brought structures closer to, yet still disconnected from, the summer kitchen. It wouldn't be until after World War II that these two parts of the house would finally be integrated, although many were and homes in both Eckley and Pardeesville today have the original summer kitchens integrated into the fabric of the house.

### *Exteriors*

At Eckley, all workers' houses were likely originally painted red with black trim, a color scheme devised by management as a way to reduce costs (Blatz 2003: 40).<sup>51</sup> The exteriors of the houses at Eckley underwent subtle but steady changes between the town's founding and the beginning of World War I. Many of these changes reflect an increasing focus on alleviating the architectural constraints placed upon small houses, in particular, while other changes reflect an increasing desire to conform to social norms and values

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<sup>50</sup> Comparison of 1915 floor plans to modern house floor plans reveals additions were removed and rebuilt. The current configuration of additions is visible in aerial photos from 1959.

<sup>51</sup> Red was among the most commonly available and cheapest colors of paints one could buy. For more information, see Blatz 2003.



that originated in other classes of society, such as a preoccupation with cleanliness, sanitation, and organization.

The changes in exterior cladding methods of the main house block over time provides insight into shifting perceptions of how workers related to their homes with special reference to their class standing. Understanding the underlying class connotations of house appearances and how workers modified (or did not modify) their houses to maintain this class ideal will be explored. At their core, all of the company-built buildings at Eckley are board and batten structures. The main house block was then sheathed in clapboard siding for all house types except the one and one half story house type. The one and one half story house type, along with the summer kitchens and privies for all houses, had very little protection from wind and rain, leading many residents to sheathe the interiors of these buildings with found pieces of wood, including dynamite box ends (Figure 55). Yet even those who had the benefit of the clapboard siding still had reason to worry: although as landlord, the company was expected to maintain the residences, the 1915 insurance document indicates that every clapboard-sheathed workers' house at Eckley had issues with their siding, including rotted, missing, and broken lengths (Coughlin et al. 1915).



Figure 55. Dynamite boxes labeled "Hercules Powder" inside a summer kitchen wall at Eckley. Photo by author.

Comparatively little info is available for cladding methods at Pardeesville.

Historic photos from the 1940s show houses clad with clapboard, while other photos from the 1950s show house additions covered with faux-brick asphalt siding. It is probable that all of the company-built houses were originally covered with clapboard. The lack of historic documentation and the occurrence of modern renovations of the houses in Pardeesville makes identifying historic exteriors difficult (Figure 56).



Figure 56. Image from Pardeesville. Note house in background with Insul-brick sheathing. Courtesy Yanac family.

One technology that was massively popular throughout Eckley and at least nominally present in Pardeesville between the 1940s and the 1970s was faux-brick asphalt siding. Popularly known by its brand name of Insulbrick, this covering consisted of a waterproof fiberboard backing coated with tar and granular aggregate in a pattern that resembles brick from a distance. The combination of tar paper and Insulbrick applied directly over the wood clapboard siding provided a wind- and water-resistant barrier around the house that significantly cut down on drafts and helped to make houses more watertight – especially those houses with rotting or failed clapboards. Insulbrick was popular throughout the country between its invention in the 1930s and the arrival of aluminum siding in the 1950s, although it was still possible to purchase the material through the 1960s. Insulbrick had the added benefit that it held a UL rating for fire suppression and could be applied by the homeowner using just a

hammer and tacks. Insulbrick required no regular maintenance and saved money for residents by eliminating the need to regularly paint their houses.

While Insulbrick had plenty of practical reasons for its popularity, its social value, too, likely had a significant role in its widespread appeal. Put simply, Insulbrick enabled wooden houses to mimic their more expensive brick counterparts. Although Insulbrick is visibly two dimensional up close, from a distance it can be difficult to distinguish. Brick houses are significantly costlier to build than wood frame houses, and even the cost of adding a brick veneer would have been prohibitively expensive for working families in the anthracite region during the mid-20th century. Recladding a house with Insulbrick would have brought the exclusivity and upper class identity (at the very least, from a distance) while improving the quality of life for residents and reducing long-term maintenance costs. Different patterns of Insulbrick allowed homeowners to add decorative touches, such as trim around doorways and windows or belt courses. Many houses at Eckley retain their original Insulbrick siding, providing a lasting testament to the durability of the product and the faith American families placed in it.

Although aluminum siding was introduced in the 1940s and vinyl siding was introduced shortly thereafter, Insulbrick continued to be the primary method of cladding buildings at Eckley through the late 1960s. When Paramount Pictures approached landowner George Huss, an agreement was reached to allow the movie studio to recover houses that would be featured in scenes with clapboard – the period-appropriate siding for the movie’s 1870s set. When the state acquired the town, the presence of the clapboard was already a major factor in their plans to re-create an 1870s company town. Therefore, while other company houses and company towns throughout the anthracite

region continued to adopt for modern cladding technologies over the last 50 years, Eckley has maintained its historic, clapboard look (Figure 57).



Figure 57. Eckley Main Street before Paramount filming modifications.

It is unknown what the company-provided summer kitchen and privy structures were originally clad in or how they were built as none of these survive today. The main house block was originally covered with wooden clapboard, and many of the houses on Lower Street, one of the two primary streets in Pardeesville, continued to be covered in clapboard siding through at least World War II. By the 1950s, however, photographic evidence indicates that faux-brick coverings such as Insulbrick were being applied to these houses. As mentioned earlier, the fiberboard and asphalt sheeting not only served as a way to weather-proof a house, but also as a form of imagined social mobility: Insulbrick made cheaply constructed wood workers' houses appear to be more expensive, more substantial, and of a higher quality almost instantly. The cost effectiveness of

Insulbrick, too, made it a popular choice for price-minded homeowners and renters in company towns across the anthracite region – so ubiquitous was this technology adopted that it is present on many houses and buildings still today. However, while Eckley's structures were eventually re-clad with wood clapboard by the movie studio, the houses at Pardeesville have been subject to the whims of a series of private home owners over the last 70 years.

Despite the variety of personal and economic circumstances of the homeowners in Pardeesville, nearly all of the company houses are currently sheathed with aluminum or vinyl siding. Aluminum siding became popular soon after its introduction in 1947, although it was quickly eclipsed by vinyl siding, which was introduced in the 1960s. Both of these options preclude the need to paint (as was necessary with clapboard siding) and are harder than Insulbrick, which lost its weather-proofing properties as soon as the product was torn or came loose. Both aluminum and vinyl siding provided better insulative properties than the original clapboard siding and lasted significantly longer than clapboards. Additionally, vinyl siding quickly became a status symbol associated with new homes in the American Northeast during the 1960s and 1970s; today fully 77% of new homes built in the region are sheathed with vinyl siding (Vinyl Siding Institute, Inc. 2015). The increased social acceptability coupled with the lowered maintenance cost and widespread availability of the product has made vinyl siding a indicator of suburbia across the former coal-town region.

Understanding the historical progression of houses exterior cladding can help us understand how people saw their homes within a changing domestic landscape. The exterior of these homes would have been a highly visible and public display of a person's

relative wealth – especially compared to their neighbors during the mid-20th century when the new cladding products arrived. As the houses were largely either privately owned by this point (as in the case of Pardeesville) or the responsibility of the tenants (as is the case at Eckley), one's house exterior would have been a direct reflection of one's wealth and not related to company maintenance (or lack thereof). Therefore, re-cladding one's house in a newer fashion might have served as a form of social signaling. Installing vinyl siding on one's former company house during the period of transition from coal company town to typical American suburb, which occurred at the same time that new middle class homes constructed in the area were also being clad in vinyl siding, could likewise have been a claim at a middle class identity.

Another important aspect of re-cladding were the benefits for those tasked with managing the home and its finances. Although vinyl and aluminum siding were more expensive than Insulbrick, they were longer-term solutions that required less maintenance and had better insulative properties. The increased insulation and greater ability to protect the interior of the house from the outside would have been major factors for women who were tasked with keeping the house clean and maintaining a comfortable interior. Although it is difficult to know what role women had in the conversation about re-cladding their wooden houses, these facts indicate that they might have had a vested interest in the subject.

### *Walls*

Another route to social uplift available to working families in the coal patch town was interior decorating. Home manuals, a resource for middle class maintenance and a

tradition that dates back to the origin on the middle class itself in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, provide clear prescriptions for home decorating. As home decoration arose as yet another way that households could signify their position within society, the importance of home manuals and of keeping up with their recommendations as a method to maintaining a middle class identity grew. The act of consulting the home manuals was itself an expression of class identity, as the manuals provided information on how to act and live within society as a woman with a specific social standing. Late 19th and early 20th century home manuals dictated approaches and methods for decorating one's house, ranging from the use of wall paper to the proper layout of a kitchen to diagrams on how to build multifunctional items of furniture (see Beecher and Stowe 1869).

One of the quickest, timeliest, and cheapest changes a family could make to their house was the application of wall covers and decorations. These changes not only fostered a sense of individuality and ownership of the space, but also abided by the social rules of the time, such as the observation that, “the first impression of a room depends upon its walls” (Wheeler 1903:90). When houses at Eckley were built, their interiors were painted a uniform shade of robin egg blue, which is now known locally as ‘Eckley Blue’. Exposed interior wall and ceiling finishes, including plaster and lathe walls, horizontal wood wainscoting, exposed joists and subfloors, and even closet interiors were coated in Eckley Blue-tinted paint.<sup>52</sup> The choice and uniformity of color was related to cost-saving measure (Mulrooney 1989:100). Because company housing was built with a

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<sup>52</sup> It is unknown whether trim, such as window and door frames, or moving structures, such as doors and window sashes, were painted due to the paucity of photographic evidence and the fact that an investigative paint analysis on the houses’ is beyond the scope of this project.

focus on cost, not aesthetics, retaining these decorative touches would have been an outward sign of poverty.

Home manuals from the period suggest changing interior details to ameliorate “many of the malformations and uglinesses [sic] of the ordinary ‘builder’s house’,” or houses that were built with an eye to function rather than appearance, such as company-built dwellings (Wheeler 1903:24). The home manuals suggest that tenants in these houses take it upon themselves to ‘fix’ these deficits through “various small surgical operations which will remedy badly planned rooms” (1903:24). These guides advocate for the use of optical illusions, such as stripped wall papers and the placement of curtains to make windows appear taller, as ways to correct ‘bad’ rooms (1903:24). The presence of wall paper and wall paper borders as some of the earliest layers overlaying the Eckley Blue paint indicates that tenants were willing to undertake the expense of decoration their home’s walls, even when those homes were rentals.

Wall paper remained an important part of interior home decorating throughout Eckley’s time as a coal company town. Wall paper was already abundant throughout the town by the end of World War I, with even houses that lacked plaster having wallpaper attached directly to wood sheathing or attached to building paper which was in turn attached to the wall (Coughlin et al. 1915). However, wallpaper and paint took on a new role in the period after World War I as tenants began painting and wall papering rooms regularly. Spaces that had previously served a strictly functional role, such as summer kitchens, were also becoming personalized and part of the domestic ensemble through the use of wall paper during this period. While part of the wall papering trend is related to the need to replace paper as it deteriorated or due to changing fashions, some amount of



change is also likely related to the rise in decorating to convey identity and individuality. One home manual discussed the connection between decorating and individuality with the sentiment that, “each room effects for the individual exactly what the outer walls of the house effect for the family, they give space for personal privacy and for that reserve of the individual which is the earliest effect of luxury and comfort” (Wheeler 1903). With the rise in mass produced home goods in the first decades of the 20th century, the working class was finally able to participate in the individual defining of the spaces of their lives.

Additionally, in-person investigations only identified summer kitchen wall paper dating back to the 1930s, although the existence of earlier layers of wall covering cannot be discounted due to the poor state of preservation of perishable materials in the town.

Over a century and a half of wall decorative accumulation has revealed that not all spaces are equal. Eckley Blue paint, the original paint dating to the construction of the town, can still be seen in some closet spaces and basement stairwells. These places, when taken in conjunction with the spaces where Eckley Blue has been repeatedly and in a variety of ways masked, reveal a hierarchy of space within the home and hint to the social mobility of company-owned, worker-occupied spaces, as well as an implied obedience to the suggestions of home manuals concerning paint and cleanliness in bedrooms. Because home manuals strongly advocated improving the appearance of the most public spaces first, it follows that secondary and out-of-the-way spaces would not receive the same decorative treatments in keeping with the prescribed decorating recommendations of middle class America.

## *Ceilings*

Although the company had been willing to put forth the expenditure to install wainscoting in the first floors of the double houses on Main Street when they were constructed, the company had not been willing to also plaster the ceilings of these houses. According to data from the 1915 insurance document as well as insights garnered from field observations, all worker houses originally had plain, undecorated, exposed ceiling joists and subfloors painting in Eckley Blue. This is despite the fact that the downstairs and upstairs walls were installed with plaster in all houses except the 1 story double house type. Exposed timbering and structural supports had gone out of fashion in the mid-19th century and had become dated and a marker of low socio-economic status (Poore 2016). To ‘enclose’ these rooms, renters and the company alike undertook a variety of methods. As originally outfitted, these houses had open ceiling with exposed joists and wide plank subflooring of the upper rooms visible from the first floor. By 1915, the ceilings in the majority of the 2 and 2 ½ story houses had been finished with plaster and lathe (Coughlin et al. 1915:125-178, 258-472). Given the uniformity of quality of the plaster as recorded in 1915 (poor), it is possible that this plastering was carried out simultaneously across houses at Eckley by the company at their expense (Coughlin et al. 1915:125-178, 258-472). A review of the areas of the town in which plastering had taken place reinforces this hypothesis. All 2 ½ story, small 2 story, and large 2 story double houses on Main Street (with the exception of a single house) are reported as having plastered ceilings on both the first and second floors in 1915. The 2 story side gable double houses on Back Street are all reported as having only the second floor ceiling plastered. The 1 ½ story double houses on Back Street have no plaster whatsoever. The

single family houses on Main Street have a variety of ceiling treatments, which reflects the individualized approach that was taken with each of these houses (Coughlin et al. 1915:125-178, 258-472).<sup>53</sup> Despite not having plastered ceilings, the 1 story double houses on Back Street and the single family houses at 130, 132, 136, and 139 Main Street found ways to conform to the societal standard of having enclosed ceilings. On Back Street, tenants used boards as sheathing to enclosed their ceiling and then applied wall paper directly on to the sheathing on the ceiling. In the single family houses on Main Street, tenants nailed muslin to the floor joists and attached wall paper to the muslin. Even the methods of improving their houses reflect the inter-class differences, as boards used for sheathing were frequently powder box walls, while the muslin ceilings represent a higher quality solution to the problem of exposed ceilings.<sup>54</sup> In the mid-20th century following the invention of particleboard and plasterboard, families nailed these finished to the joists and continued the practice of covering them in paint and wall paper. By this time, the ceiling plaster that had been labeled as ‘poor’ and ‘cracked’ in many of the houses on Main Street (in the 1915 assessment) had likely failed and were removed and replaced with particleboard or plasterboard.

In other cases, earlier changes had to be improved or replaced. The 1915 insurance survey reported the poor state of plaster in many of the houses along Main Street, especially where the ceilings had been finished with plaster and lathe (Coughlin et

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<sup>53</sup> Individualized approach refers to the wide variety of treatments in this type of house. In the insurance document, each house is described separately, with distinct sets of additions, upgrades, and amenities. These houses appear to have been treated separately, rather than as a lot as the other house types were treated.

<sup>54</sup> Muslin was being used this time as a popular form of ‘woven’ wall covering that was attached to plaster which could then be painted for a textured effect. It is possible that the muslin had been hung purposefully for this decorative technique when it was in vogue, but had subsequently been wallpapered over. For more on woven wall coverings, see *Sweet’s Architectural Catalog* 1920:1796-1797.

al. 1915:125-178, 258-472). A modern survey of houses reveals that in many of these instances, plaster ceilings have been replaced with modern materials, including plywood, drywall, and particle board. The importance of not only attaining the material comfort and amenities of the middle class, such as enclosed ceilings, was accompanied by the *maintaining* of these standards. In some houses, cardboard has been used in modern times to enclose ceilings, or, in at least one case, wall paper has been attached directly to the ceiling beams. In these cases, the façade of the middle class identity is beginning to crack, especially during the regional recession that has lingered in the region since the near-shutting of industry in the 1960s (Dublin and Licht 2005:4).

### Conclusion

This section has identified some of the ways that families, largely led by women, modified their domestic surroundings in order to attain what they determined to be a better life. Some changes, such as the installation of wall paper or closets, were largely invisible from the outside and represent changes the families made for their own convenience and enjoyment. Other changes, such as the construction of additions or the re-cladding of the house block, were much more visible. However, almost all changes were advocated for, whether directly or indirectly, by contemporary social reformers focused on extending middle class lifeways to the working class population. The overlap between individual desires and societal pressures reveals fantastic insights into the influencers in company town life and a platform from which to continue these types of analyses.

## Chapter 6. Houselot Layout as Working Class Agency

“Among most of these people the desire to rise in the social hierarchy is apparent. They are susceptible to better things, and especially so are the women. As a first condition of improvement they should be made to feel the close connection between dirt and degradation. It is far closer than most people are willing to believe and recognize. Whoever is subjected to a condition of life where cleanliness is not practiced will find it almost impossible steadily and surely to improve his moral tone” (Roberts 1904:140)

“The natural surroundings are beautiful, but not infrequently a village grows on a culm heap or between two culm heaps, so that the children play in coal from morning till night, and the women see nothing but blackness from the windows.” (MacLean 1910:135)

### Introduction

One commonality within company town landscapes that transcends the intra-town hierarchies of the working community is the organization and utilization of the house lot. Across job titles like foreman, boss, miner, laborer, and slate picker, despite ethnic traditions from Ireland, Poland, Russia, Italy, and elsewhere in the United States, immigrant and native-born families quickly adopted a pattern of spatial organization that defined company town life. While the ways that people interacted with the company town environment provides one perspective on worker identity formation and change over time, moving to the level of the house lot provides a new perspective on how workers and their families adapted to their circumstances and shaped their environment in ways that were meaningful to them. Living in these houses would have meant extensive interactions with nature, as the house lot itself became an integral part of families' living space.

Company housing was intended to locate labor in places where labor was needed most, such as near breakers and slopes. To achieve their desired level of density,

companies designed house plots to have minimal road frontage, but deep yards. Building these structures as double houses (the most common company house arrangement in the anthracite region) or even as multi-family row homes (less common, but still present) enabled mine owners to maximize labor while condensing the amount of land dedicated to domestic, non-mining activities.

The barriers between indoor and outdoor living were much more fluid in the early years of the company town. The uncovered walkway between the main house and the summer kitchen, as well as the 100-110 foot distance between the house and the outhouse, both incorporated the outdoors into the daily household routine. In many ways, the house lot in its entirety was the home, including chicken coops, gardens, storage sheds, wash lines, and the like, with the main house block serving as a place to eat and rest. Despite the obvious importance of the 8500 square feet of area behind each residence to the daily lives of workers, few (if any) of the company-generated maps include these vernacular structures. Workers used these areas to subvert company control through subsistence gardening, establishing strong ethnic communities, and exercising trades that created economies outside of those controlled by the company. The company's routine overlooking of the importance of these areas on maintaining control reflects some of the disconnect between high and low status individuals within these communities, but also reflects the ways that workers were able to use tactics within their residences in order to subvert many of the planned modes of oppression and control.

This section relies on the discussion of habitus and worker agency outlined in this chapter's introduction. The culturally defined habits that people amass due to their unique experiences as members of certain social groups have repercussions for the built

environment. Although material culture as an expression of one's objectified capital is an easy place to begin the process, looking at the ways that families' embodied capital served as a force for organizing workers' houselots, and how these organizational methods changed over time, can help reveal information about how workers thought about themselves. Furthermore, a review of the tactics used by workers in shaping their environment can help reveal worker intention and revive discussions of agency within working communities. This section will begin with a discussion of how houselots in Eckley and Pardeesville were laid out. This will be followed by a deeper look at the parts of the typical company house lot at Eckley and Pardeesville, including modifications made for food production, the types of outbuildings and structures tenants built, and the state of utilities infrastructure, as well as how these items changed or were modified over time. An examination of how identity was shaped by these aspects of the house lot, and how these interpretations might have shifted over time will be explored for each of these topics, followed by some conclusions on the role of the house lot in the larger discussion of working community landscapes and identity.

### *House and House Lot Theory*

In order to understand how workers' identities were shaped through their daily interactions with the environments that they themselves had control over, primarily the house and house lot, we need to understand how workers' identities are shaped in these types of contexts. The discussion on worker identity at the town landscape level revealed that the majority of power laid with those who designed the landscape and dictated its social arrangements. Although De Certeau showed how those without power could

challenge these designations, such as through re-defining spaces with titles that reflect the workers' lived experiences, these types of power are largely reactionary. Whether in the form of reaction to, subversion of, or obedience to corporate spatial planning, workers' relationship to the landscapes they inhabited was defined by the company's definition and control of the space. I argue here that although the company held control of the landscape as a whole as an extension of their monopolization of the industrial environment of a whole, the house and house lot provide a location where company power was effectively moot. It is here at the house and house lot levels that we can see worker identity as a function of worker self-determination and agency, rather than as a reaction to corporate controls.

Agency is defined as "the capacity [of individuals] to act" independently to make their own decisions (Barker 2007:14). However, few scholars advocate for the idea that "humans serve as entirely independent agents" free from environmental determinists (Bandura 1989:1175). The concept has had significant critiques from those aligned with structuralism and the ways that people's choices are inherently limited by the structures they exist within, which shape the very ways that individuals are able to conceive of the choices that give them agency. While some have argued that these structures are so internalized and inseparable from individuals' being as to make agency nonexistent, others have described agency as existing within these structures. Foucault identifies individuals as the result of power and their interactions with power: "the individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces" (Foucault 1980:74). Foucault sees the individual as a passive envelope shaped entirely by their circumstances and environment.



“The Foucauldian subject has no inherent characteristics, and seems to gain meaning only through its relationship with other units in the structure” (Gordon 1999:396). Although Foucault’s later work attempts to incorporate some discussions of agency, his approach as a whole discounts the ability of the individual to make decisions outside of the options their social constructions provide them. Giddens, who was also concerned with how the individual is conceived, deviated from Foucault by recognizing the role of actors in producing and reproducing the social structures they operated within (Barker 2007:233). Giddens’ Structuration Theory explores the ways that individuals’ regularized actions recreate their social structures (1984). Central to Giddens’ theory is the idea that structures both enable and constrain actors, and that actors can be agents who make choices based on their knowledge while simultaneously constituting and reproducing the social structures that they are a part of (Barker 2007:233).

Giddens’ ideas on the ways that actors actualize the social structures they reside within blends seamlessly with Bourdieu’s ideas on habitus and the embodiment of cultural capital. Bringing these two theories together, I can begin to explain worker gender, class, and ethnic identities as the result of actions taking place within the company homes.<sup>55</sup> As workers practiced and reproduced their social structures, they also began to amass cultural capital. This capital was measured by their ability to successfully perform their chosen identity. Bourdieu’s ideas on cultural capital and people’s ingrained habitus reveal how Giddens’ social structures were reproduced and preserved: through the positive social feedback one receives for fulfilling their particular identity (and its corresponding embodied, objectified, and institutionalized capital) within their specific

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<sup>55</sup> I look at homes, specifically, because as others have demonstrated, workers define themselves in terms of their houses rather than their places of employment (see Mulrooney 1989)

social field. However, the workers themselves ultimately had the choice of whether to follow their particular social structure or whether to rebel against it. I argue that workers demonstrate agency by rebelling against certain parts of their habitus (such as their identities as working class or Eastern European) in order to transcend their identities and create the social mobility they sought. Although company town landscape designs sought to embed class and ethnic differences, analyzing the more intimate landscapes of workers' lives – specifically of the house and house lot levels – can provide insights into the ways that workers accepted or challenged these outside identity definitions.

However, within these discussions of agency and habitus, it is important to observe the role of social pressures, especially structural pressures on immigrant populations to conform to American standards. Although these identities are stated as being culturally-defined (e.g. one's behaviors align with a specific cultural paradigm, indicating that that individual holds the identity associated with that culture and those behaviors), Ong (1996:751) finds that these behavioral identities are actually racially-defined, with clear connotations of superiority based on "ideal white standards". Therefore, while immigrants are able to choose whether and to what degree they assimilate into American society and cultural norms, these choices are made within larger structures of social pressures, power differentials, and coercion.

Assessing the built environment from the perspective of *all* who experienced it, not just those who these landscapes were intended for, provides a greater understanding of and recognition of agency within working community life in the anthracite region. Scholars have observed that "we also need to incorporate within our analytical and interpretive framework the question of human agency – who actually built and

maintained gardens and landscapes in our studies, not just who conceptualized their appearance and controlled the capital and labor used to shape the land” (Yamin and Metheny 1996:xvi). This work seeks to uncover the stories of those who have been of little note.

### Eckley

Although the majority of company houses at Eckley had few amenities from the time they were constructed until the 1920s, all house lots featured the same four basic elements. Residents at Eckley would have been provided with the main house block, a detached shared summer kitchen, and a shared privy. In the case of the double houses, the three buildings were divided down the middle using thin divider walls in order to provide for private use for the family on each side, while in the single family houses, these structures were individual to each house. For my purposes here, I will focus on the double house type of workers’ residence at Eckley.

The double house lots at Eckley are identical throughout the town. Each house lot had road frontage of approximately 50 ft, with lots measuring approximately 200 ft deep.<sup>56</sup> The house itself was set back approximately 10 ft from the road. The double houses were centered on the dividing property line, with the layout within the houses as well as their exterior fenestrations mirrored across the property line. The different types of company houses all had different dimensions; however, the summer kitchens behind these houses were uniformly placed 12-15 ft from the rear wall of the main house block.

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<sup>56</sup> There are a handful of exceptions – some lots located adjacent to north-south alleys are wider than 50 ft, while two double houses located west of the Episcopal Church on Main Street have lots that appear to be approximately 150 ft deep due to encroachment by houses located directly north of these double houses.

The summer kitchens measured 15 ft by 25 ft with the long edge parallel to the road. The privy was located at least 100 ft from the front of the house, but because privies and other ancillary buildings were not usually recorded on maps and privies, it is difficult to know their original location. Adding to this confusion is the fact that privies in non-urban contexts could be relatively ephemeral: privies were often re-dug, the super structure moved, and the original privy filled in when it became full (rather than incurring the expense of having a honey dipper clean out the privy). Because of this practice, it can be difficult to tell which privy was built first and, therefore, it is difficult to tell how the privy originally related to the house block. However, it is known that these privies were simple, likely wood-lined, hand dug rectangular pits with board and batten super structures. One privy super structure at Eckley of unknown construction date has a large and small seat for each side of the privy with a superficial wood dividing screen. Although it is unclear when this structure was built or if the design mimicked the original design provided for houses. The final structure provided by the company to all house lots was a fence. Expense records and the 1915 insurance valuation indicate that most, if not all, houses at Eckley were surrounded by a wood rail fence. Oral histories state that these fences were intended to protect livestock from roaming dogs and keep grazing animals out of peoples' gardens. Photos from the insurance valuation show that these fences also were used to create separations within the house lot. These three structures comprised the items that the company provided tenants although, as I will discuss later, tenants added other outbuildings and structures to suit their needs.

### Pardeesville

A discussion of the typical historical house lot at Eckley is significantly easier than a similar discussion at Pardeesville because of the transfer of Pardeesville houses into private ownership, following which many owners ‘modernized’ their houses by tearing down antiquated structures such as outbuildings. Adding to the complications is the fact that as a secondary company town, there are fewer records available pertaining to its growth and development. This section will present information about the historical house lot layout at Pardeesville, but the majority of these statements are qualified by the admission that much of the historical domestic landscape throughout the town has been subsumed by the transformation of the former company town during redevelopment efforts in the 1960s into an average, middle class suburb. Pardeesville’s historic landscape originally featured two distinct sections of town – the company-built houses and an area of worker-built houses. Because the majority of my research focuses on the company-built portion of town, only this portion will be discussed.

The company-built portion of the town consisted of two east-west oriented gridded streets that featured a total of 21 company houses. When originally built, Pardeesville featured the same four elements for every workers’ house as were present in Eckley: a main house block, a detached shared summer kitchen, a shared privy, and a surrounding fence.<sup>57</sup> Each house lot had approximately 50 feet of road frontage and extended between 170 and 200 ft back from the road. There was only one type of company double house at Pardeesville. These are two story, gable end houses of an

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<sup>57</sup> It is impossible to know if the property fences at Pardeesville were provided by the company or built by workers, as the kinds of documentation regarding fence construction that were available for Eckley are nonexistent for Pardeesville. However, historic photographs prove that all houselots had surrounding fences.

unidentified construction method that measure approximately 30 ft by 25 ft and are offset approximately 25 ft from the road. Their original cladding method is unknown, although photographic evidence from the 1940s shows the houses clad with aging clapboard (Figure 58). The shared summer kitchens at Pardeesville were built similarly to those at



Figure 58. Photo of Berish Mosgow family members, circa 1940s. Note the clapboard sheathed house in the background. Courtesy Yanac family.

Eckley: rectangular wooden structures measuring approximately 25 by 15 ft with the long edge running parallel to the road. These structures were located approximately 10 to 15 ft behind the house. Although none of the summer kitchens at Pardeesville continue to be recognizable as discrete buildings, the structures are visible behind several main house blocks where they have been integrated into the house through the construction of additions. Their construction method and original cladding are unknown. Less information is known

about the privies in Pardeesville. Excavations indicate that the privies were located approximately 100 ft from the rear of the house and were likely wood lined. The super-structures were wood. Both the privy and the summer kitchen had dividers that provided separate spaces for each side of the double house.

### Analysis

Now that the standard company provided houselot in Eckley and Pardeesville has been described, I will move to a discussion of the elements of the houselot. This section

focuses on three attributes of the house lot and how these modification to the landscape might have impacted residents' identities. The three attributes that will be discussed here are gardens and food production, outbuildings and structures, and utilities.

### *Gardens*

House lots were, for many company town residents, the only spaces available for self-expression and reflection. Until the period between World War I and World War II, workers at Eckley were not allowed to physically modify the spaces they occupied at work or at home to reflect their own needs, ideas, and desires.<sup>58</sup> The house lot was the primary exception. While the house lot provided a space where workers could escape the enforced conformity of company town life, it also served a more critical role: subsistence. Understanding the changing meaning of the house lot as the domestic sphere moved from a position of indispensable life sustainer to suburban lawn can provide more information about the transformations that workers and their families underwent during the first hundred years of anthracite mining in Eckley and Pardeesville, including how their own ideas about their place in society took shape.

The garden was arguably the most important part of the company house. Not only did gardens provide sustenance, they provided an opportunity for socialization, an expression of ethnic identity, an avenue for improving financial stability, and, most importantly, a degree of freedom. Gardens were not just a means for food, but

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<sup>58</sup> Although no policy stating that workers could not alter their homes has been found, a review of the 1915 insurance valuation shows that very few houses had modifications, and in those that did, the modifications were small. Architectural and archaeological investigations indicate that many houses added telescoping additions behind the house to connect them to the summer kitchen in the late 1920s and 1930s. Further coal histories with the family who lived at 119 Main Street indicate that they made several changes to the interior of their house in the early 1940s.

represented an investment in the family's future that required care, maintenance, planning, and patience. Families worked tirelessly in their gardens throughout the year to ensure their own survival: even into the 20th century, the stakes were high if the family garden failed.

Many families continued to plant and maintain subsistence gardens within their houselots, although after World War II, the collapse of the anthracite industry in Pennsylvania, and the rise of suburbanization in the former company towns, gardens increasingly became a point of social pride rather than necessary for survival. As gardening became more of a pastime, men increasingly took over responsibility for gardens from women.

Preparing and improving a garden were constant, life-long tasks. From the time that these company towns were founded until centralized food distribution in the form of supermarkets gained cultural prominence, gardens took up a majority of the rear house lot as working families sought to make useful as much of their plot as they could (Warfel 1993). Maintenance of a garden large enough to sustain a family for an entire year – including winter, when little to nothing could be grown – was compounded by the fact that the soils located in Northeastern Pennsylvania's coal-bearing ridges, where the majority of company towns were located, were notoriously poor. Stated one life-long patchtown resident, the ground around here grows stones (AD, interview, June 2014). Concerted effort over decades of work resulted in garden soils that were vastly superior to their naturally-occurring counterparts. These preparations literally added value to the land, as oral histories indicate that people were known to physically remove their garden top soil when they moved in order to transport it to their new residence (GD, interview,



2014). In another instance, an unscrupulous neighbor stole and sold the entirety of an unoccupied company house's backyard top soil (DM, Interview, 13 November 2013).

While the idea of someone stealing top soil is unusual, the act itself indicates how valuable good soil was to the mining families of the anthracite region. In this way, the quality of one's soil became a status symbol amongst those who relied on their gardens to survive. Of course, not all food grown on the houselot came from the garden.

Domestic food production was not limited to formally designated gardens, however, as fruit trees and bushes were regularly planted and tended to as part of a larger effort to attain nutritional self-sufficiency. The variety of plantings, which included various types of apples, pawpaws, peaches, plums, berry bushes, and others, would have provided a way for families to diversify their diets and their food resources (Warfel 1993). These domesticates were planted in different places across the houselot according to the wishes of the residents. Trees have been located at the rear as well as along the edges of the houselot, while berry bush stands have been located alongside houses as well as directly behind houses. As time progressed and the company towns increasingly were transformed into American suburbs rather than places of industry, company town families joined the modern American movement of shopping for the majority of their produce in stores rather than growing it themselves. This shift led to the removal of many company town fruit trees, while others were allowed to die and simply not replaced.

Gardens also played an important role in regulating the relationship between men's and women's social roles. Although the Cult of Domesticity identifies the entirety of the domestic sphere as the responsibility of women, oral histories indicate that the area

outside the house itself – specifically the house lot, including the garden – was actually largely a space dominated by men. Oral histories indicate that men were generally responsible for planting, tending, and maintaining the household garden, although implementing and coordinating the composting of kitchen scraps and ash would have required the participation of women, who were largely responsible for cooking, food processing, and food canning activities. This fact demonstrates how gender roles, though not apparent on the landscape, can still be an important interpretative clue to understanding life in the past.

The modifications families made to their land to maximize the output of their gardens went beyond supplementing the soil or planting trees. Where land was too steep to facilitate gardening, residents took it up on themselves to create flat areas through terracing. Terracing land for agriculture, which involves the removal of slope to fill in other areas of slope to create a flat surface, is a labor-intensive process that would have required the cooperation of several adults. Extensive terracing took place in Pardeesville in the backyards of several houses on the north side of Lower Street. Land modification represents an intense investment of time and energy into the land and demonstrates the value that working families put into their gardening efforts.

Although each family developed their own methods for managing limited economic and labor resources, the repeated occurrence of men as being primarily responsible (or equally as responsible) for the success of the garden shows how social practices in company towns transcend ethnic and class categories. Further, it demonstrates how far company town gender roles had shifted from their Old World agricultural origins, where women were expected to labor equally and alongside their

men counterparts (Goldin 1994). This shift reflects a level of dedication to middle-class American gender ideologies as outlined by the Cult of Domesticity. Although popular metaphors equated the home to a “walled garden”, the literal fenced gardens of the anthracite region were not seen as part of the home, but rather as part of the site of production (Mintz 1983:5; Wegener 2005). In the latter half of the 19th century, “[t]he prosperous, upwardly mobile... ensconced his wife and children in the house, safely removed from the place of production because it was no longer necessary for them to participate in securing the family income” (Wegener 2005:42). If food production is seen as an extension of wage and industrial labor, then gender roles as they related to working in the garden became a bastion of class identity. Further reinforcing this hypothesis is a detail from an oral history from a longtime resident of Pardeesville. The respondent specifies that his father maintained and worked the vegetable garden while his mother had a separate flower and herb garden that she maintained (EY, personal communication). This separation and differentiation of garden types connects directly to the separation of gender roles as prescribed by middle class American ideals: decorative and cooking responsibilities vis-à-vis production responsibilities. The expression and enactment of gender roles in food production, however, is not the only way that class identity (or aspirations thereof) were expressed. The financial implications of garden production had resounding effects on company town residents’ class status.

Food gardens in the house lots of company town residences not only provided tenants with sustenance, but also with resilience. Garden-grown produce was regularly canned or stored for winter and spring consumption, which allowed families to reduce their dependence on the company store. In 18XX, labor leader John Mitchell advocated

to coal miners, “[quote from John Mitchell about storing food for strike – ask Paul for citation],” further underscoring the role that food and gardens could play in workers successfully advocating for themselves and their rights. The ability to sustain oneself while negotiating with the company would have provided workers with a sense of agency that was not afforded to those who lacked the ability to go on strike due to fears of starvation. This sense of self-determination, while likely felt at the individual level rather than recognized at the community or societal level, might have provided workers with a feeling of social mobility, as they now had the ability to advocate for themselves while many others did not. Although we will never know how, exactly, storing provisions as a form of insurance for potential labor strikes impacted workers’ sense of self or sense of class identity, oral histories do indicate that household gardening provided workers with a form of currency that they could trade for goods and services throughout the town. One Pardeeville resident attested to the fact that, growing up, her Eastern European mother routinely traded canned sauerkraut for canned tomato sauce made by an Italian neighbor. This resident also recalled that food was regularly given to families that had recently experienced a death or birth with the expectation that when circumstances were reversed, the behavior would be reciprocated (PS, interview 2014). In this way, food became a social currency that strengthened community relations and regularized social relationships and behaviors. Without gardens, these social processes could not have occurred.

The role of canned food in maintaining social relationships of obligation helped keep communities, especially ethnic communities that relied on informal relationships of reciprocity, tightly knit; however, canned food as well as food in general also played an

important role in maintaining these ethnic identities to begin with. Researchers have demonstrated that ethnic food traditions, including cooking methods and specialized ingredients, were kept alive long after migration had declined through the use of church cookbooks (Shackel 2017). Because the Catholic churches in the area tended to be ethnic-specific, their publishing of cook books became a way for cultural foodway traditions to be preserved and passed down. Oral histories demonstrate that ethnic patterns in animal rearing and consumption – with Southern Europeans preferring to keep chickens and hogs while Eastern Europeans preferred to keep geese and goats – were still alive and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One company town resident remembered an annual traditional within his Eastern European community where a young goat was slaughtered and a feast was held every Easter. Other, subtler ethnic traditions were maintained in the gardens of company town homes. Although the poor Northeastern Pennsylvania soil limited what could be grown, and families took the opportunity to grow whatever would take root, ethnic differences in the crops grown in the backyard plots reflected the ethnic origins of their growers. Roller (2015) notes that a resident of Pardeesville grew bean plants from seeds originally brought into the country from Italy; although the original seeds are long gone, the family continued to harvest and propagate that variety of bean specifically because of its ethnic importance. Likewise, the sowing of spicy pepper plant variety appears to have been more common in Italian gardens than in Irish or Eastern European ones. Although the climate and soil forced everyone, migrant or not, to contend with the limits of what could realistically be grown in the anthracite region – including tomatoes, cabbage, potatoes, and zucchini – some ethnic preferences in planting patterns was present.

Canning food produced in gardens had another, even more impactful role in helping to define workers' identities within the context of their immigrant communities. Wood has explored the ways that home canning, especially after canning had fallen out of social favor due to the widespread availability, increased quality, and decreased cost of aluminum-canned goods, took on greater cultural symbolism in the first decades of the 20th century (2014). Wood (2009, 2014) argues that the act of canning is not solely about the food itself, but is also a display of American cultural identity. Ong notes that the process of becoming a cultural citizen involves "self-making and being-made" according to the normative behaviors and identities associated with that cultural identity due to economic pressures from mainstream society (1996:737). Definitions of what behaviors constitute being a cultural citizen are ultimately racially-derived, with cultural belonging acting as a stand-in for racial belonging to the majority. Ong concludes that behaviors associated with an 'American' identity, then, are emergent "out of the history of European-American imperialism [and] continue to shape attitudes and encode discourses directed at immigrants... This dynamic of racial othering emerges in a range of mechanisms that variously subject nonwhite immigrants to whitening or blackening processes that indicate the degree of their closeness to or distance from ideal white standards" (1996:751). Wood uses Ong's observations on the role of action in ethnic identity to argue that immigrant women used canning to claim American cultural citizenship, with women exhibiting both coercion by broader social forces that urged migrants to conform to white social standards and agency by choosing to engage in cultural 'whitening' processes. The US government began encouraging women to can food at home during World War I to free up aluminum canned foods for soldiers under

the guise that doing so was “patriotic” and “exhibited their loyalty to their nation” (Wood 2014:280). However, women in Wood’s study in the company town of Berwind, Colorado, continued to home can food even after the end of the war “because of its association with Americanness and patriotism” (2014:280); archaeological data from Pardeesville indicates that families there, too, continued to can food after the end of World War I.<sup>59</sup> Building on Wood’s observations about ethnic identity and migrants’ claims to American culture, it is entirely possible that women in the anthracite region continued to can home-grown food as part of larger efforts to promote and strengthen their identities as Americans; however, it is also possible that these choices were the result of pressure from American society to assimilate, which caused women to adopt outmoded ‘American’ behaviors.

### *Outbuildings and Outside Structures*

Looking to the spaces in the house lot outside of the main house block, we see that tenants wasted no time in erecting a variety of structures to serve various needs. Company town residents regularly built animal enclosures such as stables, chicken coops, and dog kennels, semi-permanent storage structures such as coal bins, sheds, root cellars, workshops, and garages, agriculture-related structures such as grape trellises and fences to surround gardens, and recreational structures such as porches, in addition to the company-provided outbuildings consisting of summer kitchens, property fences, and privies. Investigations into these structures is on-going, but a brief discussion of their

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<sup>59</sup> Few archaeological remnants of food storage, either in the form of glass or aluminum cans, have been recovered from my work in Eckley.

meaning and impact on workers' lives is pertinent to the broader discussion of the houselot.

Of central importance to the anthracite region example is the fact that the gender ideologies inscribed by the Cult of Domesticity were largely inaccessible to newly arrived immigrants. The lessons in these manuals presupposed a division of gendered labor within the home – a quality that was largely missing from rural agrarian contexts where all able hands were needed and used regardless of gender. Many of the newly arrived immigrant families are unlikely to have immediately adopted this household division of labor in the same way that native-born American men and women had. One way that these differences in worldviews becomes relevant in a discussion of architecture is in the inevitable discussion of who, exactly, is building and designing the additions and outbuildings at Eckley. Bernstein and Torma (1991) found in their study of homesteading families that immigrant women were frequently working alongside their husbands to erect buildings – a job that would be expected of them on farmsteads in Europe. Given the number of immigrant families in the anthracite region that came from farming backgrounds, it is easy to see how these families would retain their ethnic household organization (Roberts 1904). However, women participating in construction would have been wildly inappropriate under the tenets of the Cult of Domesticity. Additionally, women served as the bearers of ethnic architectural traditions, with immigrant women directing the design and construction of homes and outbuildings according to their unique cultural heritage (Bernstein and Torma 1991:70). At Eckley, the majority of the extant additions are built in the same board and batten style that the houses are or are not built with any recognizable construction method. Although this construction style is not



ethnically identifiable, the context of the company town also increases the likelihood that workers' access to raw building materials was reduced when compared to their rural counterparts or that workers chose to simply imitate the construction method already in place rather than try to integrate two different construction styles. Another important factor in women's level of involvement in the material aspects of the building design and construction is the women (or woman) herself, with individual personality a major factor in determining whether a woman was even likely to be interested in building design. Personality is, unfortunately, rarely preserved in the material record.

### *Animal Pens*

While houses and houselots were modified by residents to suit their individual needs, outbuildings present the only aspect of workers' built environment that was designed, built, and utilized specifically according to workers' needs.<sup>60</sup> However, because workers devised the intentionality behind these structures, outbuildings also frequently served multiple mechanical and symbolic functions. The example of animal pens highlights how worker-built structures could come to have multiple meanings. Although the primary mechanical function of structures such as stables, (hunting) dog pens, and bird coops is to house or contain animals, these structures had the added, possibly unintentional, role of signaling to neighbors about residents' ability to afford these animals. Horses, in particular, were expensive animals to keep and maintain. These animals were so prized that a horse was literally an Eckley Fair raffle prize in 1890, with tickets for the horse

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<sup>60</sup> With the exception of instances where workers built their own houses, such as the example of the Italian Village in Pardeesville.

being advertised alongside tickets to win a gold watch (FT, 30 January 1890:1).

Therefore, building a structure to house such a creature would have been indicative that you could afford to buy (or perhaps win) and keep one. Horses were not just a status symbol though – they were also used for transportation or assist with manual labor such as plowing. However, being that manpower could also fulfill these needs, only those with the extra funds would have owned a horse. Other animals did not have such a simply pattern of ownership. Cows, birds, pigs, and goats all provided meat, with birds also providing eggs and cows and goats providing milk. Therefore, families could have owned these animals as a cost-saving measure by being to produce at home these standard dietary staples. However, although these animals saved families money, they also represented a somewhat significant initial investment: young animals are cheaper, but had to be raised which equated to an investment in food resources for an animal that was not yet providing any tangible benefits. Likewise, laying birds provided eggs, but egg production varies throughout the year and with the age of the bird. Therefore, although the poorest workers in town would have benefitted the most from raising livestock, their financial situation might have precluded that option. Additionally, the products provided by these animals were available from mobile vendors, including meat, as well as the company store, including eggs and butter. The purchasing patterns for butter and eggs by Sharpe, Weiss, and Company in the first decades of Eckley's existence indicate that many workers did not own egg-laying birds or milk-producing cows ("Invoices to Sharpe, Weiss & Company 1872-1874", Series 1, SWCR #399, NMAH, Washington D.C.). Additionally, owning certain types of animals might also have been an expression of ethnic identity; however, there has been no archaeological evidence from Eckley so far to

support this assertion (Westmont 2017). Hunting dogs played various supportive roles during hunts and likely increased the amount of game that an individual was able to bring home. However, hunting dogs also had to be fed, which created a drain on family resources in instances where the drawbacks of owning hunting dogs outweighed their benefits. Little information is available about who in the household would have been responsible for caring for animals kept at the house.

### *Agriculture-Related Structures*

Grape trellises are another common form of outdoor structure that are visible on former company house lots today and which are identifiable in historic images of company houses. Trellises and grape growing would have been another form of food production at the house but also a connection to ethnic identity. Several Southern and Eastern European cultural traditions involve the home manufacture of alcoholic beverages, including wines and liquors such as *Pálinka*, which originated in the Carpathian Basin during the Middle Ages but is now produced locally in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, from grapes and related fruits. Grape trellises were also used as a recreation spot, as they provided shaded areas during the hot summer months.

### *Recreation-Related Structures*

One type of house lot modification that was nearly unanimous across all houses in company towns – including mine owners' houses – after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the porch. Porches today serve an important social function, but historically, porches would also have provided a barrier of liminal space between indoors and outdoors

(Donlon 2003:14). Archaeological evidence from houses on Back Street reveal that some of the earliest additions consisted of stone and brick platforms at the rears of houses adjacent to the houses' back doors (Warfel 1993:43; Westmont 2017:107). These spaces would have prevented mud and dirt from being tracked directly into the house, and might have served as a place for miners and mine laborers to remove soiled clothes before entering prior to the construction of a wash house. In this way, porches serve many of the same functional roles as concrete pads as will be discussed later in the 'house lot' section. Immigrants, in particular, were harshly judged in local and national contexts during this time as suspected carriers of disease and their homes were regularly called dirty or rodent infested (see Rood 1898). Porches could also have served the same social functions in the past that they currently do. Porches provided a place to meet and exchange information in an informal space. The porch, then, provided a barrier between the private lives of the family and the public, outside world. Porches provided a way for families to mediate their exposure to the public sphere.

Porches also impacted the quality of living within the houses themselves. A report from 1898 written by an engineer for the president of an unnamed company operating near Hazleton noted that "not many of the houses have any protection over the front doors, thereby permitting the storm to drive into the houses under the doors, that do not fit very closely to the floor... a small porch would also be of service, which, if made, would prevent the building of such porches by tenants as is sometimes the case, and so built do not always improve the external appearance" (anonymous quoted in Magnusson 1920:102-103). A report from nearly two decades later re-stated the importance of porches to working families. As a method for "providing ampler quarters for the

workmen,” houses built by companies in the anthracite region after 1870 “were made more attractive and comfortable by the addition of front and side porches” (Parker 1916:57-58). This progression indicates that workers desired porches, and some companies decided that rather than having workers build their own porches that were not to the standards or aesthetic qualities that the company sought, they would build their new houses with porches already included. This is an interesting case of consumer feedback, in which tenants’ wishes and subsequent actions changed the way that companies approached an issue. While this is a limited example, the underlying premise – that if enough workers demonstrated an interest and attempted to build a porch themselves, the company would change their policy on porches – is an important signal in the relationship between management and workers.

### *Company-Built Structures*

The service structures industrial mining companies built on their workers’ houselots are frequently the only outbuildings addressed in company town research (Fishback 1992:162; Cools and Boyle 2018:3). This is possibly due to biases in preservation – company buildings were typically built by experienced carpenters, which likely increased their sturdiness and longevity – as well as the fact that summer kitchens and privies were integral aspects of daily life for all members of the family.

At both Eckley and Pardeesville, lots were enclosed by wood post and rail fences, both to mark the limits of a tenant’s domain as well as to corral families’ livestock and protect them from roaming dogs (Warfel 1996:14). These fences were maintained by the company in the case of Eckley; it is unknown if tenants or management built and

maintained those fences at Pardeesville (Figure 59). As direct company control and oversight of both towns dwindled as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, these fences gradually



Figure 59. 1940s photo of unidentified man in Pardeesville showing typical company fence. Courtesy Yanac family.

disappeared. Removing the fences would have been a major transformative moment in the widespread regional movement from company-owned double house to suburban semi-attached single family home that took place most prominently during the redevelopment era of the 1960s and 1970s. Taking down the fences and converting productive houselots into yards and driveways enabled former company town residents to claim a middle class suburban identity and quietly ignore their industrial pasts.

Interactions with these structures would have helped define worker identity in subtle but important ways. The summer kitchen would have largely been the domain of women, as they were typically assigned gender roles that related to household management and maintenance, including cooking. Therefore, the layout and organization of a summer kitchen, as well as the organization of the space between the house and kitchen that women would have needed to traverse to reach the kitchen, would have fallen to women in the household. The kitchen, therefore, despite being removed from the main house block, would have been one of few areas in the house lot that belonged almost solely to women, especially before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when worker-built additions became more common at Eckley. As the kitchen was “the center of all home activities” (White 1914:20), having control of the kitchen

would have further solidified women's control of the household as a whole. Maintaining a household based on a doctrine of strict order and discipline was a central tenant to home manuals during this time, and the ability to categorize, organize, and display the means of everyday life provided working class women with an illusion of control over lives that were increasingly out of their control (Leavitt 2002:176). Furthermore, the kitchen was where the ethnic foods that helped sustain Old World identities in New World contexts.

Summer kitchens also had repercussions on workers' sense of class identity. Because the summer kitchen was intended to move cooking outside of the main house block during the summer to help keep houses cooler, families who could only afford one cast iron stove would have had to literally disassemble and reassemble their stoves in order to move cooking outside. The physical labor involved in moving this stove twice a year would have been a physical reminder of the family's economic inability to afford the trappings of their wealthier neighbors.

### *Utilities*

Although aspects of the house lot like gardens and outbuildings are more visible and immediate, the less visible aspects of the house lot, such as the installation of utilities, were equally as important to residents' quality of life. Utilities including drainage plumbing, piped running water, sewers, and electricity were all important facets of domestic life that operated at the level of the house lot. This section will explore how utilities that primarily affected areas outside of the house (or the absence of those utilities) shaped workers' sense of self and how workers ultimately took matters into their own hands in their quest to build a better life.

Arguable the earliest and most important utility to be installed at workers' houses was water drainage pipes. At Eckley, these appear to have been installed by residents themselves, with archaeological excavations finding drainage pipes in irregular configurations at different houses, which indicate that they were likely installed ad hoc by residents rather than as a single, concerted effort by the company. These pipes would have redirected water from the house or yard into the gutters that lined the streets of Eckley. Removing standing water from residences would have helped to reduce the potential transmission of water-borne parasites and infectious diseases, including cholera, dysentery, typhoid, and intestinal worms. In this way, workers sought to improve their circumstances (and prevent the tragedies associated with disease) by modifying aspects of their house lot – namely the installation of these drainage pipes. Further, the installation of these pipes and the focus on sanitation and cleanliness relates back to popular stereotypes of immigrants at the time as being dirty and vectors of disease (see Lindsay 1993). By combating these stereotypes through their attempts to prove that they were not who xenophobic elements of society portrayed them as, immigrants were also fighting for equal respect from their American counterparts. Although likely coincidental and not due to an intentional desire to make a political statement, immigrants inadvertently bowed to nativist pressures and definitions of what an 'American' should be through these modifications. While this represents one small step in a much larger societal movement to assimilate migrants to an 'American' model of society, ironically, one which was based largely on cultural practices established by earlier immigrants groups, the ethnic implications of these changes are important. The fact that these modifications were made at houses on Back Street as well as on Main Street indicates



that concerns about water drainage (and, potentially, concerns about being associated with negative stereotypes of immigrants) was felt throughout the town's social structure (Westmont 2017).

Pipes to redirect grey water away from the house also would have impacted those tasked with maintaining the cleanliness of the house. Because grey water was otherwise likely to be discarded in yard space near the house, the drainage pipes that removed the water from the area also would have helped low lying areas near the house from becoming muddy. With fewer muddy areas around the house, there would have been less mud to track into the house. Photographs from the turn of the century show Eckley's gutters had planks laid across them that granted people access to houses without walking through standing water (Figure 60). This change likely would have most greatly affected women, who were responsible for keeping their home clean under popular contemporary gender norms.



Figure 60. Image from Eckley Main Street with fences and gutter visible, circa 1915. From Coughlin et al. 1915.

While information about the installation of utilities and infrastructural improvements at houses in Eckley is scarce, information about these subjects in Pardeesville is nearly nonexistent. Information about the installation of utilities in Pardeesville is largely derived from current homeowners, my own observations, and residents' memories of growing up in those houses. Archaeological evidence has also helped illuminate info on the state of infrastructure in the town. Roller's (2015:224) observations at the Italian Village in Pardeesville indicate that residents were undertaking projects to prevent water from collecting around the house, including installing concrete pads close to the rear entrance of the houses. However, no indications about water drainage or management were uncovered at the excavations on Lower Street.

Related to the efforts to drain water away from houses is the dual need to getting water to the houses. At Eckley until the mid-1920s and in Pardeesville until sometime after the turn of the century, residents relied on semi-public wells to supply water that was then hauled to the house. When water was piped directly to workers' houses, the sheer amount of grey water families would have been managing would have increased exponentially. However, documents prove that water was piped to different houses at different times in Eckley. In 1915, 16 workers' residences had running water – the majority of these consisting of the single family homes reserved for mine foremen and bosses (Coughlin et al. 1915:4-10). Only three multifamily homes – the two double houses across the street from the single family homes as well as the former-hotel which by 1915 was serving as a four-family dwelling – had running cold water in their kitchens. Additionally, this period began to see the introduction of baths in the town: one family had installed a bath and shower on the second floor of an addition to their single family

house in 1910. Having water piped directly into workers' houses would have eliminated a major aspect of household labor and brought these houses more in-line with the standards advocated in the 'new' company town model. Being that running water had previously been restricted to the highest-paid workers in Eckley, having this amenity provided to all of the houses – including the smallest houses at Eckley – would have eliminated yet another status difference between the groups within the town's internal social hierarchy. The installation of running water in the houses increased efficiency for domestic tasks within the home and would have brought working class families, through their association with increasingly middle class amenities, closer to a sense of middle class solidarity and identity (Allen 1917:14). Additionally, the variety of plumbing arrangements seen in houses at Eckley indicates that residents were responsible for organizing the plumbing of their houses beyond the pipe that the company supplied to the houselot. While it's difficult to gauge how (or if) people's sense of social achievement would have changed with this new development, the impact on gender roles is more apparent. At Pardeesville, water was run to the company houses sometime in the first half of the 20th century, although it is difficult to know whether this occurred before or after the town was divested. Oral histories indicate that running water consisted of a single spigot in the basement and residents were responsible for plumbing the rest of the house as they deemed appropriate (CW, personal communication 2014). No information is available about when running water was supplied to the houses in the Italian Village.

Electricity was installed in Eckley in 1929, just five years after the houses were plumbed for water. Electricity was also part of the 'new' company town movement, which saw increased amenities for worker housing. Although correspondences between

the superintendent at Eckley and managers at Coxe Brothers and Company from 1923 indicate that the company was not interested in incurring the cost of installing electricity in company houses, electricity was run to houses in the village in 1929 (SWCR #399, 23:4:25; Warfel 1996:11). The company at Eckley likely raised power poles and connected a power line to the house, but otherwise left the installation of the knob and tube wiring system with the house to the residents themselves – similar to how plumbing was probably seen as the responsibility of the tenant. The presence of knob and tube wiring in some of the former-company houses in Pardeesville indicates that electricity was run to those houses before or around the time that the company divested the properties in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In this case, tenants were also likely responsible for wiring their own houses for electricity, with the company supplying the materials and a connection to the electrical grid, but the tenants responsible for the actual installation of the knobs, tubes, wires, location of switches and fuse boxes, and so on. Electricity would have been particularly important for the house, as it would have enabled the installation of electric lighting for the first time as well as made possible a suite of new time saving technologies, including vacuum cleaners, electric ranges, and washing machines (Bowden and Offer 1994:725). Additionally, those who were able to afford these machines would have demonstrated an increased social standing by owning what were at the time expensive and new technologies. In fact, some tenants had decided that waiting for the company to bear the cost of installing electricity wasn't worth it and chose to absorb the expense of electrifying their houses themselves. Between 1915 and 1923, 30 houses in Eckley had had electricity installed by tenants (SWCR #399, 23:4:25).

The installation of sewers came late to the anthracite region. The rural-ness of the company towns combined with the rugged topography of the area made connections to local sewer systems untenable or cost prohibitive. Although running water was present in a handful of houses on Main Street as early as 1915, the majority of residents in the town continued to rely on outdoor privies into the 1950s and 1960s. At Eckley, families utilized outhouses or installed individual septic systems until a sewer system just for the town was installed by PHMC in the early 1970s. The lack of sewer system had previously been identified as a major barrier to redevelopment of the town into a museum (Alberts E. Peters Associates 1972:8). It is unclear when the sewer system was installed in Pardeesville. Unsubstantiated oral histories repeat a common (though not entirely fictional) refrain that several of the houses in Pardeesville are reputed to have taken advantage of the abandoned mine tunnels that cut through the area by purposefully tapping into them to drain sewage and household effluence once bathrooms were installed. In this way, working families turned an otherwise inequitable liability into an asset for the hygiene of the household. It is difficult to verify the veracity of these claims, however. If the stories are true, workers were successful in attaining what had previously been reserved for the upper classes (indoor bathrooms) while simultaneously impugning their employers.

Telephone lines were also run into houses during this period, and telephone jacks began appearing on kitchen and living room walls and baseboards. Because the need for internal wiring for telephone jacks and electrical outlets was not foreseen by the homes' builders, the new technology had to be spliced into framing that was never designed to hold these appliances.

### Conclusion

The houselot provides a canvas for illustrating the various ways that families sought to exercise their own sense of identity, including identities that were both self-defined and imposed from the larger social structure (Ong 1996, Upton 1988). Families, including women, modified the environment of the houselot in ways that promoted their own survival and success. Whereas the consumption of material goods served as an outward expression of internal identities, the houselot provided families (and women) with a means of gaining and wielding power within their communities through the cultivation of resources such as food. The structure and amenities associated with the houselots conveyed the differential of power and influence that different families in anthracite company towns held, such as the presence or absence of electricity or the ability to rent a company-built house versus company-owned ground. Families used consumption and cultural capital to amass access to more prestigious positions within the company, which were synonymous with greater social power; however, these delineations of power were dictated by the company and defined by white, native-born society, which had the dual effect of coercing migrants to adopt white, middle class American cultural practices as they sought to achieve better living and working conditions. While immigrants' decisions to pursue high class status demonstrates agency, it is important to acknowledge that these decisions are situated within larger structures of power and pressure that sought to define migrants by society's terms.

The ways that people experience these different parts of the houselot changed meaning over time. With each of these new developments and changes, people's methods

of using their households also changed. Gardens in houselots allowed residents to provide food for themselves, thereby bypassing higher rates for produce that they might have encountered at the company store and subsequently saving money. Gardens and their association with canning food also might have served as a way for women to further enact an ‘American’ identity for their families. However, oral histories indicate that gardens largely became the responsibility of men in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, indicating shifting gender norms. While gardens provided nutritional necessities for workers, other aspects of the house lot, including outbuildings and utilities, allowed workers to claim and enjoy a higher level of social status. The construction of buildings to store items indicates that ability of a family to afford excess consumption of material goods, while stables, bird coops, and dog kennels indicate that people can afford to rear these animals. Similarly, the increased access to utilities that are largely considered standard today, including running water, municipal sewer systems, and electricity, allowed families to access a variety of consumer appliances that would have demonstrated economic wealth as well as the ‘achievement’ of the American Dream of a middle class lifestyle. This was further reinforced by the shift in gender roles, during which women, who were typically responsible for maintaining the home, were afforded more free time through the use of these machine. As people’s access to new products and technologies developed, they were able to enhance their social capital and class status and begin to shift their societally-prescribed gender roles.

Although the houselot is frequently overlooked as a source of information about identity, this demonstrates that a more in depth look into the ways that the built environment was shaped and in turn shaped workers’ lives should be examined. As the

suburbanization movement of the 1960s gradually took over redevelopment plans for the anthracite region, many of the resources families turned to the houselot to provide were successfully outsourced. No longer seen as part of a suite of resources necessary to survive, the houselot has gradually become lawn and the outbuildings and utilities either obscured or removed.



## Chapter 7. Corporate Control through Town Planning

“If we want to understand ourselves, we would do well to take a searching look at our landscapes” (Meinig 1979: 2)

### Introduction

Domestic architecture is conceived of with a human subject in mind; in this way, understanding the meaning of architecture from a social perspective can better explain the social intentions behind the design. Socially-embedded meanings within landscapes help to shape how people think of themselves. Furthermore, these meanings can differ between different groups moving within the same landscape based on their individual experiences (Upton 1988). It is this acknowledgement that different groups can experience and understand spaces in entirely different ways that creates room for identity formation in ways that controls some groups while simultaneously liberating others. Company town planners were able to take this concept of spatial engineering a step further by sowing distrust and competition between groups at different levels of the social hierarchy. This distrust, often based in ethnic stereotypes and utilizing imagery that evoked fear, succeeded in dividing groups of workers by preventing the type of cooperation that could have led to the company losing control of the means of production. The division of labor the company needed to maintain control was instilled on the landscape and maintained through the messages embedded in that landscape. In this way, the social hierarchy of the town did not change, with workers focused more on moving up within the structure rather than questioning their position within the landscape of corporate inequality.

This chapter explores the way that worker identity within two coal company towns, Lattimer No. 2 and Eckley, was formed in response to some of the designed aspects of the town plan. Parts of identity such as gender, class, and ethnicity are consistently redefined based on individuals' surroundings; in the case of the company town, where the built environment was intended to convey notions of orderliness and industrialism and workers and their families lived and worked their entire lives within the industrial landscape, the ways that people experienced their environment has the potential to heavily shape how they think of themselves.

I will begin with a discussion of the theory that underlies the role of people in a planned environment. In order to understand how workers developed an identity through their interactions with the company town landscape, we must first understand how identities can be developed differently within the same settings at the scale of the town plan. Once the mechanisms for reading different experiences from the landscape are explained, the ways that these tools were deployed, both intentionally and unintentionally, in ways that maintained control over the laboring population and their families and upheld that status quo will be discussed.

### *Landscape Theory*

When discussing identity formation at the landscape level, two perspectives are important: the intended messages embedded in the landscape through the landscape's design and the ways that people actually experienced that designed landscape. These two experiences, the intended and the actual, did not always align, creating unique and organic experiences outside of human intention. Utilizing De Certeau's theories on urban

landscapes, including their creation, maintenance, and subversion, I discuss company town landscapes as part of the overall strategy for corporate maintenance of power. I then transition into the ways that people defined themselves based on the spaces in which they found themselves, and provide an example of how these concepts play out at the landscape level.

As De Certeau notes, “the desire to see the city preceded the means of satisfying it” (1984:92). While by no means as large New York City, both Eckley and Pardeesville reflect this sentiment: company architects carefully laid out and designed house lots, houses, and primary outbuildings on a multitude of maps, which were subsequently redrawn to keep track of the changing landscape. New areas were developed or rented to others to develop, with these changes also immediately recorded in company maps. While companies managed the shape and pace of physical changes to the town landscape from an imaginary gods-eye perspective, they also directed efforts towards managing the perspective of the city that they could see: the street level. Mine owners monitored the street-facing facades of the structures and regulated changes visible from this perspective. While company owners planned and constructed a town that suited their corporate structure – one based in Taylorism and the replicability of workers – workers operated at a different level. Workers instead made “use of spaces that cannot be seen” by re-defining the very systems of hierarchy that the mine owners had established (1984:92). Maintaining their control over the outward appearance of the town allowed companies to reiterate their presence at every level and remind workers that, from the company perspective, they are identical and replaceable. While some tactics instituted by workers were organic reactions that sought to subvert or adapt actual corporate attempts to

achieve social outcomes within the labor force, other tactics workers instituted were simply reactions to design choices made incidentally by company planners.

De Certeau observed that one major control planners had over the landscape and those that occupied that landscape was the ability to define names for places. Oftentimes, these names defined the area's use. Workers were constantly surrounded by and intersecting with places that they had no role in defining – despite the fact that these definitions had real consequences for workers' lives. Roller (2015) observes the use of street names in Lattimer as an example of this type of power. Company owners and managers lived on 'Quality Road,' while workers were relegated to houses on 'Canal Street'. Moreover, corporate control of the landscapes' definition meant that even when people sought to subvert or redefine places – or define places the company had neglected to define – their power to do so was always measured against those with the power to assign official designations. In this way, workers and those who moved through the landscape had no real power – just power relative to that of the designs who named the spaces. This struggle to define the landscape as the workers saw and experienced it, rather than as yet another form of corporate spatial and social control, further impacted how workers thought about and defined themselves and those around them.

Official names and designations can have tremendous impacts on the identities of the people who work and reside in those spaces. Anderson's (1987) work on Vancouver's Chinatown and the creation of 'Chinese' as the institutionalized racial categorization within a (majority white) British settler society is an excellent example of the ways that a designed and designated landscape can be used to shape the conversation on identity. Anderson illustrates the ways that white society's control of "the power of definition"

(1987: 581) was used on the physical landscape to define settlers' identity. Although the Chinese residents were undoubtedly place-making on the western end of Vancouver long before (and after) the geographical designation of the area as a 'Chinatown,' the official designation of that place by wider society emphasized an ethnic affinity within the population, "regardless of how each of the residents of such settlements defined themselves and each other – whether by class, occupation, ethnicity, region of origin in China, surname, generation, gender, or place of birth" (Anderson 1987:583).<sup>61</sup> The social creation of place from a previously unnamed space through the social embedding of an identity qualifier ('Chinese') worked to define the area's residents *for* themselves, rather than *by* themselves. The area's connotation as a 'Chinatown' was "an idea with remarkable social force and material effect," including justifying the treatment of people of Chinese origin by powerful institutions (1987:581). That Vancouver's Chinatown was branded in the 1930s as Vancouver's "Little Corner of the Far East," in the 1950s as a slum, and in the 1970s as a hub for multiculturalism reveals the ways that places and their prescribed meanings can have lasting, non-static implications for the identities of others. Anderson's work on Chinatowns shows how those with the power to label the map retain the ability to shape the identities of others, often without their permission.

Aside from the implications of an externally-designated identity as seen in the Chinatown example, workers' inability to name the places they lived their lives is important because it is these designations that allow people to inscribe memories on to places and, therefore, begin the process of place making. Defining areas based on one's personal experience "change[s] them into passages" in De Certeau's urban text, creating

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<sup>61</sup> Anderson also points out that there is no "anglo-town" in these areas, which further underscores the use of place as an exclusionary strategy for identity purposes.

meaning from and making sense of unimportant, nowhere places. When places begin to be known by their vernacular titles, “a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning” is created (1984:105). These titles reify the “memories that tie us to that place... [and] give a neighborhood its character” (1984:108). In an account of his childhood made in 1970, Joseph Falatko revealed some of the vernacular titles spaces within Eckley were given by the workers who lived there. Discussing sledding spots in town, Falatko reminisced that “we kids, scores would start at the inclined colliery tracks, whiz down past Boot’s and the main still-dirt street, past Zynel’s chicken coop, and practically into Brudnak’s front door” (Falatko 2018 [1970]). The landmarks mentioned in his account – Boot’s, Zynel’s chicken coop, Brudnak’s front door – are all example of vernacular place-making. We can see through these processes how important being able to define and feel a sense of ownership of one’s surroundings is to feeling invested in a place. It is precisely this sense of belonging and investiture, however, that companies sought to discourage in their towns. The company town environment aimed to disabuse workers from the notion that they had any kind of claim to the industrial landscape. This construct presents a primary conflict to De Certeau’s idea of the *wandsmänner*. De Certeau uses the *wandsmänner* to imagine the ordinary person who moves through the urban text created by planners, but who lacks the ability to read the larger message behind the paths they take due to the scale of the landscape. De Certeau suggests that the sum of all of the *wandsmänner* together “compose a manifold story” compromised of the individual pieces of meaning and subversion crafted by each ordinary person (1984:93). In the case of the company town, though, the ordinary person is necessarily replaceable. Companies relied on a constant influx of new labor to maintain

low wages and prevent labor from gaining an advantage. Allowing workers to begin to define the town for themselves, rather than simply accepting and obeying the company's designations, presented a legitimate threat to corporate power. Understanding the ways that workers consciously and unconsciously struggled to regain control of their surroundings, or accepted corporate definitions, provides insight into the ways that meaning and the role of the industrial landscape was negotiated.

Complementing De Certeau's observations on defined places, Upton's work with plantation houses shows how spaces' defined meanings could be at odds with their social contexts, especially in the context of slavery. Upton cataloged the ways that expected social behavior was reinforced by the built environment through buildings' appearances (1988:441). The sunken parks and formal gardens of the plantation sought to share people's perceptions of the landscape and the people who built it. However, these perspectives were intended to be read and responded to by the white upper class. Upton uses the landscape to read how enslaved people might have redefined the landscapes' power dynamics as they traversed these spaces that were never designed for their use. Upton's work shows how people invariably integrate their own meanings onto the places they live and work through their investment of memory in geographical spaces. Company towns provide a unique example in which to explore this disconnect and better understand how landscapes of power are defined by the power-less that occupy them. Because spaces are ultimately about power dynamics, the battle between the power to define the landscape and the power to transform landscapes' places into spaces is one that is on-going.

While De Certeau's and Upton's approaches imply a power differential, other scholars are more explicit about how this difference worked in the case of company towns. The layout of the company town was intended to create landscapes of difference through intermingling natural topographical features with socially-defined messages of value and hierarchy. The use of physical spaces to elicit specific, desired social responses has been termed "spatial engineering" (Herod 2011: 21). However, social responses are rarely one-sided, as people internalize, interpret, and subsequently react to the environment around them. The use of spatial engineering in company towns resulted in workers' own assigning of meaning to specific areas within the town. Andrew Herod has termed the ways that "workers' praxis shapes, and is shaped by, spatial context" as "labor geography" (Herod 2011:22; Herod 2001). A labor geography approach to understanding company towns acknowledges that landscapes, especially those of industry, actively reflect as well as create social relations. Landscapes, then, are places where power relations are on full display, and deeper insight into how workers moved through the town and adapted a landscape they did not control can illuminate the ways that workers expressed their own agency under these circumstances.

Archaeologists, in particular, have picked up the mantle of exploring how industry and labor coexisted within these landscapes. Drawing on concepts similar to Herod's labor geography, archaeologists interested in industrial landscapes have been particularly interested in the ways company town architecture was used to achieve corporate goals. The use of "technologically defined social relations" reveals the ways that social definitions could be used to sow and reinforce class, ethnic, and status differences within the working population through the manipulation of spatial placements



(Nelson 1981:173). This method of spatial organization is seen in both Eckley and Pardeesville, as well as the anthracite region writ large. Mulrooney's work on the western Pennsylvania coal fields indicate that these tools were used in town planning there, too (Mulrooney 1989, 1991). One particularly illuminating example of this type of analysis is Nassaney and Abel's work on a 19th-century Massachusetts cutlery company. They observe that, "factory owners and managers used the built environment (that is, factories, housing, landscapes) to discipline agrarian habits to an industrial regime ... Employers influenced behavior in domestic settings by designing and owning boardinghouses, tenements, and other essential aspects of infrastructure that workers relied upon daily" (2000: 242). Similarly, Beaudry's (1989) work as the Boott Mill complex in Lowell, Massachusetts, has revealed that corporate bosses used the industrial landscape in order to shape workers into being more obedient and docile through strategies such as boarding houses with live-in guardians, mandatory church attendance, and constant corporate surveillance. Although coal mining requires a different type of labor compared to Taylorism-based factory systems, their arguments about difference and control within the working population map identically onto the coal company town environment.

Finally, it is important to note that although these decisions were made at an abstract level before the town was ever built, the lived reality for workers in these spaces was directly impacted by these architectural choices. Michael Roller's adaptation of Zizek's discussion of ideological and symbolic antagonism and violence reveals how architecture had real consequences within the company town. Coal companies succeeded at "marking difference through distinctions of space, architecture, and infrastructure... [and] these material realities made it all too easy for violence to be perpetrated" (2015:v).

Zizek says that ideological violence in the form of systemic and symbolic antagonism beneath forms of representation is a subtle form of violence that is much more pervasive than large, obvious instances of conflict. Roller applies Zizek's idea of violence against forms of social identity, including ethnic and race – two facets of identity that were regularly used throughout the anthracite region to mark and maintain social violence. While Roller focuses on the material aspects of that latent form of conflict, this chapter builds upon his acknowledgement of the role of architecture in maintaining antagonisms inherent in identity negotiation and formation.

At the landscape level, we see that control of the meanings embedded in the built fabric of the town was a constant negotiation taking place at many scales. Every aspect, from the names of the streets to the layout of the houses, was used to reinforce difference through distinctions of space while perpetuating social microaggressions aimed at minority ethnic groups, but undoubtedly felt by everyone residing and working within these towns. While the company town landscape provides an explanation of how corporate power was able to use the built environment to affect worker identity, this scale provides little feedback on how workers responded to the situation. The landscape level obscures workers' roles in redefining places because so much of workers' resistance and tactics occur at a smaller, individual- or household-level scale. This new scale, of course, necessitates a new approach to understand the ways that identity was formed. The next section will focus on these mechanisms, including the concepts of worker habitus and agency.

### *Hierarchies Imposed by the Landscape*

Since the creation of the first company towns, their layout has been manipulated to best suit the needs of industry, and since the first workers moved into those towns, they have been finding ways to subvert the landscape's intended influences. The social meanings within company town landscapes were as fluid as they were varied. Crawford notes that the built environment, too, was malleable: "the built environment of the company town not as a static physical object, but as the product of a dynamic process, shaped by industrial transformation, class struggle, and reformers' efforts to control and direct these force" (Crawford 1995:1). Although company towns were invented to solve a problem (namely the need to attract labor to remote areas), their growth and development drove industrialists to use the company town format to continue designing away barriers to industry: as their private property, company managers could physically remove undesirable people, such as labor organizers, while their control of the store meant that they could take advantage of their towns' remoteness by instituting a retail monopoly. This section explores the ways that the identities of workers of two company towns, Eckley and Lattimer No. 2, were shaped due to architecture. My analysis here will focus on the changes made to three primary types of identity: ethnic, class, and gender. Where possible, I will discuss how these identities came into contact with other aspects of identity in order to incorporate an intersectional identity.

### *Eckley*

Before delving into the ways that power is read and transmitted across the landscape, it is important to understand the town from an on-the-ground perspective. At Eckley, one's

value was read through one's physical relationship to the mine owners' houses; at Pardeesville, which was a secondary town without owners' houses and without the same level of differentiation in house sizes, value was measured through one's relationship to the main colliery (which was located in neighboring Lattimer No. 1). The intended flow of people through Eckley today is very different from that originally designed in the 1850s. The town was designed to be approached from the area's largest population centers, Freeland and, further away, Hazleton, from the western end of town, with visitors entering Main Street by the road that led to Freeland and Jeddo. Upon one's approaching, the first building an individual would have seen as originally intended would have been Richard Sharpe's Gothic Revival-style mansion, followed in short succession by the well-appointed homes of mine owners Francis Weiss and Asa Foster.<sup>62</sup> Interestingly, the company's mule barns were located directly across Main Street from the mine owners' houses.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> In 1860, several prominent associates of the company partners are also living in this part of town, including Dr. George Wentz, the company doctor for the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company as well as Eckley, and Edward Leisenring, John Leisenring's son who would eventually start a coal company with George Wentz' brother, John. Therefore, although only two bonafide partners out of the original six lived in the part of Eckley, it was populated by other powerful men as well. Incidentally, John Wentz would go on to marry John Leisenring's daughter and Edward's sister, Mary Douglas Leisenring (Rottenburg 2004; US Census Bureau 1860).

<sup>63</sup> Although mules were frequently stabled underground to reduce the amount of ancillary work each day, Richard Sharpe insisted that his mule be brought above ground each night (Blatz 2003). This is purportedly because Sharpe was immensely proud of his mules and meant to show them off as a means of impressing visitors to the town. A common refrain within the coal industry prior to the introduction of electrified machinery was that mine owners cared more about the health and safety of their mules. As one scholar notes, "a mule was said to be worth more than a child because there were plenty of children willing to work" (Vaux 2004:16, Callahan 2008). This is a reference to boys between the ages of about 12 and 16 who worked as mule tenders, mule drivers, and door openers for those driving the mules. These jobs were also fraught with dangers, primarily related to the coal cars the mules hauled. In fact, one of the youngest underground fatalities at Eckley Peter McCue, was a mule driver's helper when a rope used to connect the mule and coal car snapped and the boy was crushed by the runaway car. He was 14. Whether this is true or not, Sharpe's own records reveal a deep dedication to his mules, including records of the name, color, age, purchase price and vendor, annual valuation, updates on health, and recordation of if and when sold, including to whom and for how much, or the circumstances that led to their death and when.

Moving further into town, the company's civic buildings, including the store, post office, hotel (where newly arrived workers were housed until accommodations within company housing could be found), and doctor's office, lined the road before the highest-end workers' houses – the single family houses – were reached. On the south side of the road stood a row of single family houses while the north side of the road featured a handful of the largest four-square style double houses as well as the heavily ornamented Presbyterian and Episcopal churches. At the end of this block was a perpendicular road that stretched approximately 1000 feet south to the Eckley Slope No. 2 and its corresponding breaker.

Continuing east on Main Street, a visitor would have encountered a stream that bisected the town. The stream, which ran north-south, served as a topographical reinforcement of the social relations of the town. On the western side of the stream were the houses of the mine's owners and middle management, while on the eastern side of the stream were the houses rented by miners, laborers, and other poorly paid workers. This town layout is reflected on the 1873 D.G. Beers Atlas of Luzerne County. This geographic separation held until 1876 or 1877 when, under the ownership of John Leisenring who sought a dramatic and immediate expansion of the workings at Eckley, the stream was rerouted into a man-made ditch and 18 additional housing units in the form of nine new double houses were built in the former stream bed. The houses built in this section maintained the gradient of housing quality, however, as they are the largest of the double houses at Eckley (2 ½ stories) and have the most amenities. As is standard for the rest of Eckley and, indeed, standard of company towns in general, these large 2 ½ story double houses as well as the rest of the double houses in the town were built as

identical, mirrored images on both sides of the road. These double houses spanned three blocks, with progressively smaller four-square style double homes as a visitor moved from west to east.<sup>64</sup> When a visitor reached the eastern end of workers' houses on Main Street, they would have encountered the (Irish) Roman Catholic Church and its Gothic Revival-style rectory. From there, Main Street continued out of town towards the town of Sandy Valley.

Running parallel approximately 400 feet south of Main Street was Back Street, which was originally platted as South Street. Back Street also consisted of three gridded blocks of double houses, with the two story double houses with plaster and lathe walls located in the western-most block and the one and one-half story double houses with no plaster and no insulation comprising the two eastern blocks. Unlike Main Street, Back Street did not lead anywhere. One north-south oriented road that diverted from Main Street cut through the Back Street settlement and led to Buck Mountain. Other maps from the late 19th and early 20th centuries indicate the presence of a handful of other houses located west of Sharpe's House on Main Street as well as a small assemblage of houses located in the center of town to the north of Main Street. In the 1873 map, six company double houses consisting of 12 housing units are visible on a street located approximately 400 feet north and paralleling Main Street. This street does not appear to have been named and no record of these houses is present in the 1915 insurance valuation or the 1938 aerial photographs of the area, indicating that they were not around for very long after the map was made. A second cluster of houses is located in this general part of

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<sup>64</sup> The exemption to this is the presence of three company houses on Main Street from the original construction period that are the small two story house type that are located west of the cluster of large two story house type.

town. These houses consist of three structures that appear to represent five residences. This cluster of houses is located approximately 350 feet from Main Street on an alley that parallels the road. The houses are of an irregular shape, indicating that they were possibly built by the residents rather than the company's carpenters. In the censuses conducted in the early 20th century, this short street is called School Alley (so named for Eckley's second school house, which had formerly stood at the end of the road). However, these houses were demolished sometime between the 1959 aerial photo of the village and the 1972 master plan.

Other houses in the town include a collection of dwellings around Eckley's hotel. The 1873 map shows the hotel with the doctor's office located due west. An undated map made between 1873 and 1915 reveals that both the doctor's office and the hotel were converted into dwellings at some point during that period and a new dwelling house was built directly south of the hotel. The 1915 insurance records shows that the hotel had been converted into a four-family dwelling, while the newly built house to the south was a three-family dwelling. Census records from 1920 refer to the houses as being located on 'Store Alley' (United States Census Bureau 1920). The former doctor's office still stands today, although the hotel and the house behind it were torn down sometime between 1939 and 1959 based on aerial photographs.

As Eckley's management structure changed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Eckley's landscape likewise continued to evolve. Following the transfer of Eckley to the Lehigh Valley Railroad in the early 1900s, the domestic aspects to the town (and its landscape) was largely ignored. The end of the era of corporate paternalism saw services and houses removed and not replaced. Several civic buildings, including two churches

and the store were torn down in the 1920s and 1930s, with the Store Alley houses being removed shortly thereafter. However, because workers were still necessary throughout the 1920s and 1930s to maintain the mining operations there, the domestic aspects of the town were largely kept intact. Increased mechanization, the increased availability of cars, and the decline of the anthracite industry as a whole, however, meant the need for patchtowns was quickly waning. Sometime in the 1940s, 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of Back Street was strip mined – taking with it all of the small two story houses and many of the one and a half story houses. As the town's population dwindled, families were able to move from Back Street to Main Street, and the Back Street houses became largely abandoned and were allowed to fall into disrepair. Today, only one original Back Street house is standing, but the structure was heavily modified in the early 1990s to make it ADA compliant and ready for interpretation.

The end of the industry meant new changes for Eckley's landscape. In 1968, then-owner George Huss allowed Paramount Studies to make tremendous changes to the town with the goal of transforming it into an anonymous 1870s anthracite company town. Paramount's changes included the removal of physical evidence of modernity, including covering the paved road with dirt and gravel, burying power and telephone lines, the re-cladding in clapboard of all or parts of houses, and the construction of several new buildings, including a prop breaker, located where the west end of Back St. was formerly located, and a prop company store, located at the place where 121/123 Main St. had once stood. Other temporary houses were also raised for the production, but dismantled shortly afterwards. Soon after shooting was finished, the town was purchased and donated to the State of Pennsylvania for use as a museum – thereby preserving over 100 years of



landscape change (Albert E. Peters Associates 1972). Although fires, lack of funds, and preservation hurdles have led to the controlled demolition of several of the town's structures since it became the property of the state, what stands at Eckley today represents approximately 40.8% of buildings present in 1873 and 39.8% of those present in 1915.<sup>65</sup> In 1975, the museum built a visitor's center on the site of the 1912 school and now directs tours entering from the east side of town.

### *Pardeesville (Lattimer No. 2)*

For the first fifty years of Pardeesville's existence, it was only accessible by road from Lattimer 1. From 1869 until the 1930s, two iterations of roads provided access to the satellite settlement. The first of these roads traveled approximately from the company offices and store in Lattimer 1 north passed the coal mine to the rear of the yards of the houses on the south side of Lower Street (Roller 2015:339). Narrow alleys separated all of the double houses and aerial photos show the areas behind the houses as heavily trafficked, but the road appears to have been routed between double houses 221/223 and 225/227 on Lower Street. A second, more circuitous route was added around 1908, and the original road connecting the towns was removed. This new road departed Lattimer No. 1, travelled past the Canal Street settlement, headed northeast, and then turned directly west to meet the coal breaker that was located at the eastern end of Upper Street. Around 1938, the same year that the village's name changed from Lattimer No. 2 to

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<sup>65</sup> These only comprise domestic and civil buildings. There were 93 such structures in 1873 (of which 38 remain) and 123 such structures in 1915 (of which 49 remain). The differences in number of structures is caused in part by Leisenring's building phase in the 1880s, during which new domestic buildings were added and older buildings, including many which were present in 1873, were removed.

Pardeesville, this second road was removed and a new road connecting the rear of Pardeesville where the Italian shanty village was located to Pennsylvania Route 209 (Roller 2015); however, oral histories indicate that a foot path running from the Italian Village to Drums and the Sugarloaf Valley located to the north of Pardeesville had existed for some time prior to the construction of the formal road.

As originally constructed, Pardeesville was entered from the south from Lattimer. Visitors would have approached the double houses from behind rather than from the front – a sharp departure from the type of approach made at Eckley. Visitors who traveled between the two double houses would have found themselves dumped literally in the middle of Lower Street, with three doublehouses to their left and two double houses to their right. This road continued north where it intersected Upper Street, where one would have encounter more of the same identically spaced and outfitted doublehouses.

The double houses on both streets were 1 ½ story frame American four-square style houses with low basements and clapboard siding. Approximately 9 or 10 fo these houses were located on Lower Street, with an additional 10 doublehouses on Upper Street. However, these residences were soon unable to keep up with the growing population of the community. To accommodate more workers, the company began allowing people to build their own houses on land rented from the company on the margins of the formal, established village of doublehouses. The Italian Village, as the worker-built enclave came to be known was located at the west end of Upper Street and encompassed a roughly right-triangle-shaped settlement.

Because the Italian village was not subject to the same design considerations as the company-built portion of town, this part of the settlement took on a completely different look. The organic growth of the shanty town contrasted sharply with the order, angles, and formality of the company-designed town (Figure 61). The demarcation between the company houses and the shanties wasn't just architectural, however: one resident remarked on



Figure 61. Drawing of Pardeesville Italian shanty village, ca. 1898. From Hambidge 1898.

“dividing line” that existed between the two sides of town (Roller 2015:206). Because company housing was frequently tied to pay, job, and ethnicity (Mulrooney 1989), the 21 company houses in No. 2 were originally rented largely to workers of Irish or Eastern European origin or descent (PS, interview 2014; United States Census Bureau 1920). The wave of Eastern European immigration slightly preceded that of the Italians, which meant that Italian migrants did not have access to the company-built houses for the first decades of the town’s existence. This also meant that these migrants did not have access to the same amenities provided to those who rented company double houses. This difference in housing quality combined with the geographic separation of the two areas helped instill and reinforce a sense of social and class difference between the residents of the ethnic enclaves.

While the company built houses were regular, the houses in the Italian Village were anything but. The entrance to the Italian Village splintered off of Upper Street at an acute angle on to a worker-built road later named Church Street. Both sides of Church Street were lined with vernacular houses of varying shapes and sizes. A company map from 1885 shows St. Nazarius Church, a predominantly Italian Catholic church, “surrounded by various forms of housing arranged organically around it” (Roller 2015:205). Long, barracks-shaped houses and smaller, likely domestic support structures radiate out along Church Street from St. Nazarius. Roller (2015) demonstrates that worker-built houses continued to fill in the space around the church through the end of the century. Additionally, other, newer houses were built during the period, “scattered among fenced-in empty lots containing gardens and animal pens” (Roller 2015:206), in the less-densely populated area west of Lattimer 2. In the Italian Village, workers were free to amend their house plans and layouts to suit their needs, unlike their company double house-renting counterparts. Roller’s work shows how one house in the Italian Village was repeatedly added to, expanded, and divided over a 60-year period to reflect the needs of its occupants.

But just as the decline of the anthracite industry begat massive landscape changes as Eckley, so, too, did waves of change arrive in Pardeesville. When the mining company began the process of divesting its domestic assets in the late 1930s and into the 1940s, the character of the town began to change. Roller tracks the Pardeesville Italian Village’s transformation from a collection of vernacular buildings constructed in the style of southern Italian church-centered villages to a community that more greatly resembled a traditional American suburb. Some see these changes – especially their impetus and

enforcement through a top-down bureaucratic system – as an attempt to recolonize and reclaim the “landscape and social relations of the anthracite region” (Rose 1989; Roller 2015:408). The village church, St. Nazarius, which had been built from dynamite boxes and colliery scrap, was demolished in the 1950s after a new, respectable church built from modern materials was erected in 1947 (Roller 2015; Jackson 2013). A redevelopment plan for post-industrial communities around Hazleton, published in 1967, advocated for the redevelopment of Pardeesville through “spot clearance and rehabilitation [to] eliminate a number of blighting influences” (Kendree and Shepherd Planning Consultants 1967; Roller 2015:389). The redevelopment suggestions were met with vigorous official approval as new zoning, building, dumping, and rubbish ordinances came into effect throughout Hazle township. Today, the landscape of Pardeesville resembles the arrangement and aesthetic of modern suburban communities (Roller 2015:219).

However, after the federal limitations on migration from Southern and Eastern Europe came into effect in the late 1920s, the ethnic enclaves began to lose their strength. Second and third generation immigrants who often had no first-hand experiences with the Old World increasingly adopted American customs and culture. While aspects of ethnic life, such as religious practices, remained rigidly unchanged, migrants and their families found themselves adopting and adapting American (as well as other ethnicities’) foodways, dress, and language standards. Census records and oral histories indicate that by the 1920s and 1930s, immigrants were not teaching their children their native tongues in an effort to better integrate the next generation (United States Census Bureau 1920; PS interview 2014).

Another major factor in the integration of Northeastern Pennsylvania's ethnic populations was the eventual decline of the industry and the resulting outmigration and population contraction. As housing surpluses became more common in the former company towns after the end of World War II, people were able to move to nicer or larger houses, or, in the case of several families from the Italian Village in Pardeesville, into new construction houses built as part of the region's redevelopment effort. As the connections between migrants became harder to maintain, the church emerged as the last bastion of ethnic preservation. However, even churches eventually came under fire as culture shifted, church attendance plummeted, and people began rejecting the strict standards of the old ethnic churches for more mainstream options.

*Analysis: Identity in the Age of Corporate Paternalism, 1854-1920s*

This section will read the ways that the built fabric of the company town shaped identities of those living within its systems through an analysis of various aspects of the constantly-evolving town plan. The three sections presented here – gender, class, and ethnicity – will explore various avenues for identity formation between the founding of Eckley and Pardeesville during the period of corporate paternalism and the eventual shift to management styles that reflected the tenants of welfare capitalism in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>66</sup> Although management styles began to change after the turn of the century, the built fabric of the towns remained largely the same; therefore, the discussion of identity

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<sup>66</sup> Although the movement towards welfare capitalism and Progressive Era methods of managing and controlling labor began to take shape in the 1880s and 1890s, adoption of such methods was significantly delayed in the anthracite region. Therefore, the timeline used here of 1854-1920s refers to the period under which these company towns, Eckley and Pardeesville, were managed under a corporate paternalism framework, which includes such hallmarks as company ownership of houses, company-sponsored churches and schools, and company employment.

during this period will be more heavily weighted, with the later discussion of identity during the era of welfare capitalism focusing more on how things changed from their original designs.

### *Ethnicity*

Until 1924 when immigration legislation effectively cut off immigration from countries outside of Western Europe, coal companies relied on a constant stream of migrants in order to keep wages low and maintain an ethnic-based hierarchy within the workplace. Ethnicity, an aspect of identity, was used as a tool by companies to categorize and control workers and their families. Mulrooney's work in coal company towns in Western Pennsylvania has detailed how ethnicity was the primary factor in house assignments in company towns and how keeping workers physically divided prevented integration and labor organization. Mulrooney's theory connects six disparate items to show how workers' location within the town was not a choice and actually part of a larger trend of separation and segregation: a worker's ethnic group affiliation would signify what occupations they could hold within the company, which in turn dictated how much the worker could earn; earnings were a major factor in determining what type of house the company would rent to a worker, with the poorest paid workers receiving the cheapest housing. Because the rent for these houses was cheap, the structures were poorly made compared to those supplied to miners and middle management and amenities provided to those higher earning families were not furnished. In this way, ethnicity indirectly determined everything from which neighborhood people could live in to whether a family would have indoor plumbing (Mulrooney 1989; Bennett 1990).

The effects of these policies on the social geography of the company town were massive. Blocks were effectively transformed into ethnic enclaves, which strengthened ethnic identities but helped to foster a sense of isolation, ethnic boundaries, and distrust of those outside of the community (see McGuire 1982). Bolstered by ethnic fraternal groups, these communities were able to retain or adapt their Old World traditions and customs and, in some cases, adopt new traditions. However, these externally-created ‘communities’ often cast together people who likely would not have identified with one another if given the choice: people who had self-identified to census takers as Hessians, Germans, and Prussians found themselves living side-by-side in the late 19th century, while individuals from Poland, Hungary, Galicia, Austria, and Russia and their children likewise found themselves grouped together and routinely referred to collectively as ‘huns,’ ‘hunks,’ ‘hikes,’ or ‘hunkies,’ all of which are derogatory terms for Hungarians (see Turner 1977, Hambidge 1898).<sup>67</sup> Similar to Anderson’s observations in Vancouver’s Chinatown, the creation of the community by those with the power to delineate places on the map succeeded in binding together people who would not necessarily have identified themselves as a single entity in other circumstances; however, the economic structure of the company town environment forced workers to rely on social networks for support, which meant that workers who were able to integrate into their newfound communities were better off. The ways in which these ethnic communities were created, regulated, and inscribed within the landscape had important impacts on the people who lived in these towns.

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<sup>67</sup> This reference to Galicia refers to the former medieval kingdom located in what is today western Ukraine, not the region of Galicia in Spain. This difference is distinguished by the individuals in the census from Galicia reporting that their mother tongue was Slovene.



The layout of house lots within the town plans was a major aspect of the built landscape that helped to solidify these social and ethnic groups. Ethnic groups were loosely congregated into certain styles and sizes of worker housing. At Eckley, the newest arrived immigrants (in the 1850s, these were the Irish, but by the 1880s, these were Eastern Europeans) were placed in houses along Back Street (originally platted as South Street). These houses were the smallest workers' houses and consisted of the one story double house and the smaller of the one and a half story double houses. In Pardeesville, which was founded later than Eckley, the company houses were mostly rented to Eastern Europeans, while the Italians, who arrived slightly later than the Eastern European immigrants, were left to construct their own houses at the furthest end of town. With few resources and even fewer buildings supplies, the Italians' resulting houses were of a markedly lower quality than their company-built counterparts.<sup>68</sup> At Eckley, the houses were arranged in blocks, with five or six double houses (10 or 12 residences) clustered together linearly east-west with clusters separated by roads or alleys oriented north-south. Similarly, the company houses in Pardeesville featured clusters of four houses oriented east-west that were segmented by roads or alleys oriented north-south. The worker-built 'Italian' settlement in Pardeesville dramatically eschews the ordered arrangement of the company-designed settlement pattern, and so does not follow the four to six double house cluster pattern. Although the company houses reflect order, symmetry, and control, the deep yet narrow lots of these houses enabled neighbors to

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<sup>68</sup> It is important to note that in both Pardeesville and Eckley, this pattern of ethnic settlement was likely more of a company practice than an official policy. Additionally, although these patterns are apparent in census data, some degree of intermixing is also visible, demonstrating that segregation was not a hard rule.

interact constantly. These interactions led to social networks that individuals and families used to support themselves and each other.

The construction of narrow, deep lots allowed for the creation of social networks that would have benefitted everyone in the house, but the majority of those benefits would have been felt by women. Ethnographic examples in working class ethnic enclaves shows that women that had a social network of other women to rely on drastically improved their quality of life. Work by Bolles (1996) shows that Jamaican women were successful at navigating social and political turmoil during the late 1970s by drawing on social networks of women. Similarly, an edited volume by Westwood and Bhachu (1988) shows how networks of mutual support supply different populations of minority women in Britain with a social and economic safety net in an environment that was increasingly perilous for those at the bottom of the social ladder. Although these examples draw on contemporary trends, these same social patterns have been observed archaeologically. Wood's (2002) work in Ludlow, Colorado, shows how these relationships enabled families to build enough support to enable them to collectively fight for better treatment. Although men would have called the strike and engaged in the majority of the performative aspects of the strike, it was only with the permission of the women in the house that strikes could carry on. Additionally, because a strike would only be successful if everyone from a particular job sector left, but job types were largely determined by ethnicity, the social networks that arose within the ethnic sectors of the company town would also have been instrumental in ensuring a strike maintained solidarity and was successful. As keepers of the house, women were intimately familiar with the food stores and financial health of the house. These gendered social networks would have been vital

in ensuring not only the success of community-wide movements, such as boycotts or strikes, but also in enabling the day-to-day success of industrial life. Oral histories from company towns attest to the ways that social networks provided connections to jobs, child-care, and reciprocal aid arrangements. The connections to this form of social power would have provided women with a distinct social advantage over their male counterparts. The creation of these ethnic- and gender-based networks was never an intended outcome by the coal companies, as labor solidarity only increased the likelihood of strikes; however, the establishment of these networks attests to the ways that labor took advantage of the landscape for their own benefit, even though these results were never the intention of the towns' planners.

In an ironic reversal of fortunes, the company's disregard for the Italian immigrants in Pardeesville and the creation of the Italian village through the practice of ground rent had the accidental outcome of building community cohesiveness and preserving ethnic identity within the Italian population. The vernacular layout of buildings in the Italian village – the very aspect that Hambidge's (1898:824) publication derided – was not a question of “read[ing] character from handiwork,” but rather a replication of the workers' lived experiences in Italy. Traditional Italian towns built during the medieval period largely followed an orthogonal town plan in which large streets were intersected by narrower streets and alleys at right angles (Friedman 2011:23). In this arrangement, a central piazza with a church and well dominated the social lives of residents, with a tightly-knit, dense urban community was located around this central location (Belco 2010:16). Pardeesville's Italian village featured a tight clustering of residences around the church and its well, which is located in a small open space on the

south side of the church. Roller identifies these spatial housing patterns as “reflect[ing] perfectly the Southern Italian spirit of regionalism known as *campanilismo*, literally the ‘sound of the bell,’ [that] tied identity to the space within earshot of the church (Roller 2015:255; Cohen 1990; Williams 1938). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the landscape of the Italian village is dotted with roads and alleys intersecting each other at 90 degree angles (Figure 62).

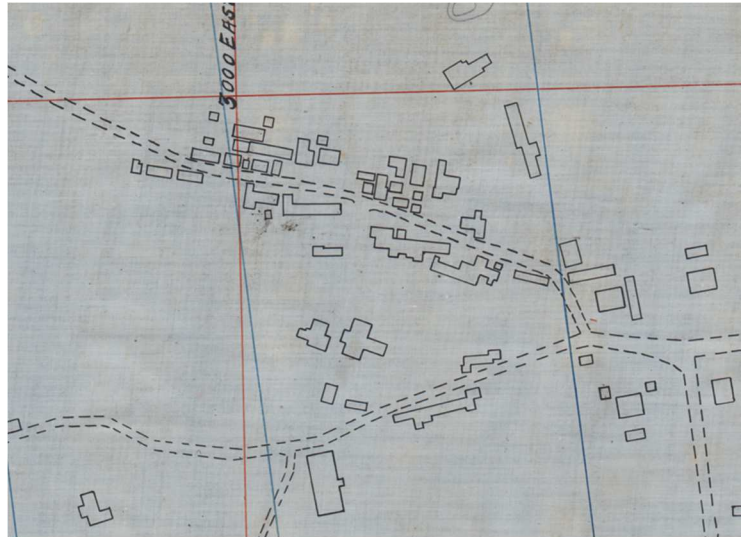


Figure 62. Post-1912 Map of Pardeesville shanty village showing organic layout

### *Class*

Ethnicity was not the only aspect of identity that town planners used the landscape to shape. Each position within the coal mining labor structure came with its own degree of social prestige, which workers worked hard to protect and maintain. “The servile portrait of the anthracite miner suffers from a lack of detail. It does not reflect, for example, the subtleties in the status differences between the various occupations within the hard coal industry,” observed Harold Aurand (1980:462-63). These levels of prestige below ground were repeated above ground through company town housing policies that embedded these social categories into patterns of who could rent certain houses. As workers sought to move from lower social fields to higher-status fields, the houses they occupied became part of their objectified cultural capital.

At Eckley, the layout of the houses into blocks of different styles of houses also shaped the way families defined their socio-economic or class status. Each block of houses was characterized by a certain size and style, with each style also having its own accompanying amenities. Eckley had six sizes/types of workers houses with various amenities depending on the house type (Table 12). As families progressed from the lower paying, lower prestige jobs as slate pickers or laborers to jobs as second and first class miners, they were able to move to better equipped houses elsewhere in town. Oral histories also indicate that young families started out in these smaller houses and moved to the more central, larger houses later in their lives and careers. Moving up within the housing system became its own form of social achievement and class advancement.

Table 12. Types of Houses at Eckley

Amenities	1 ½ Story	Small 2 Story	Large 2 Story	Small 2 ½ Story	Large 2 ½ Story	Single Family
Size (each unit)	20' x 14.5' [435 ft <sup>2</sup> ]	24' x 16' [768 ft <sup>2</sup> ]	30' x 15.5' [930 ft <sup>2</sup> ]	25' x 18.5' [1,156 ft <sup>2</sup> ]	33' x 18' [1,485 ft <sup>2</sup> ]	17' x 40' [1,360 ft <sup>2</sup> ]
	Side gable	Side gable	Side gable	Front gable	Side gable	Front gable
Location	Back St.	Main St.	Back St.	Main St.	Main St.	Main St.
Basements	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plaster Walls (1st floor)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plaster Walls (2nd floor)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wainscot	No	No	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Unknown
Piped Water (pre-1915)	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

At smaller or satellite company towns, the limited scope of company investment meant that fewer types of company-built workers' housing were built; however, other ways to convey these social categories through housing policies emerged. At Pardeesville, the higher status, higher paying positions (such as coal miner) were given

space in the company-built double houses, while under- and above-ground laborers as well as those employed in the coal breakers were allowed company-owned ground to rent on which they could construct their own houses. The resulting settlement appears, from contemporary descriptions and maps, to be crowded at best, and a health hazard at worst. The company houses, for comparison, were all identical, two and a half story double houses with basements. It is unknown whether they originally had plaster walls, although a 1910 report on company town living situations indicates that even company houses that did have plaster walls, “[were] poorly built and cold in winter” (MacLean 1910:134). However, in contrast to Eckley, the housing pattern at Pardeesville appears to be driven to a larger extent by factors other than occupation. Families in the doublehouses in Pardeesville appear to have stayed in their double houses for decades, even as age and experience changed over time. One possible explanation for this is that renting a doublehouse represented the best housing option available, with the option of moving to Lattimer No. 1, which would have been closer to several civic services, either not possible or not desirable enough to warrant a move.

The worker-built houses on rented ground, however, were a far cry from even that low standard: clusters of long, narrow barracks-like houses were repeatedly added to until only tight, winding spaces separated residences. Their construction from cast-off materials left their appearance ramshackle and incongruous. Hambidge’s account recalls the shanty town as being the opposite of the planned and orderly company houses he had just left:

The roofs of the buildings slant at all angles, with no two sides of the same length or deflection. One portion will have eaves, while its companion will scorn the luxury. The same incongruity prevails everywhere. Some of the small openings used for windows are high, while others are low. One door will open in, and

another out. The hinges have evidently come from the company scrap-pile, and the staples and latches and locks from the same source. Some of the roofs have shingles, other weather-boards, while others are formed of great pieces of rusty sheet-iron. [1898:825]

While these vernacular houses were definitely a departure from the orderly, identical company houses located just paces away, socially the residents of these houses were nowhere near their company house neighbors. Michael Roller's interview with a life-long resident of Pardeesville revealed that Pardeesville might as well have been two separate, isolated communities: "You see where the coal company houses stop? This is where the dividing line is... So if you look west...from these coal company houses, what do you see? All these irregularities. And the reason for that is when the Italian people came here they acted as squatters. There was no system from the coal company to control anything" (MD, interview 21 March 2013 cited in Roller 2015:206). The visual discontinuity between the company houses and the worker-built houses extended into the social realm, as the treatment and public perception of the Italian workers living in the enclave indicated. Roller suggests that the interviewee's "positive interpretation of this history" puts a positive spin on "the community's endurance of the indignities of peripheralization," but that the central fact that the Italian workers were treated as squatters by their employers while other nationalities of workers were not is an indication of a larger trend of inequality (2015:206). Throughout the anthracite region, housing type was used to denote both ethnic and class standing.

Although the company houses in Pardeesville were a significant step up from the houses workers built in the Italian shanty village, these houses, too, had their own class designations. Within Pardeesville, those houses represented the height of social achievement; however, because Pardeesville was a satellite of Lattimer, the company

houses at Pardeesville were seen as lower social class than similar houses in Lattimer. Oral histories with Pardeesville residents recount incidents where people from Lattimer would throw rocks at children from Pardeesville when they attempted to travel to Lattimer to retrieve their mail and pay. Even today, when the road connection between Pardeesville and Lattimer has long been severed by strip mining and redevelopment, there is a lingering sense of social inequality between the two towns that is reflected in the economic and social realities even today. The houses in Lattimer had a higher social value than those in Pardeesville, despite being identical houses, because the houses in Lattimer had one significant amenity that the houses in Pardeesville lacked: proximity to

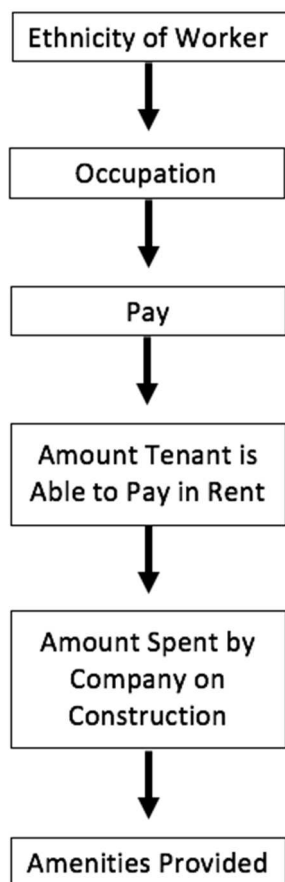


Figure 63. Relationship of housing factors leading to housing segregation. Adapted from Mulrooney 1988.

company resources including the store, post office, and company offices where pay was collected. As previously discussed, the gradient of house size and quality (at Eckley, this gradient stretched from the west where the mine owners' houses were located to the east where the first mine shaft was located, while at Pardeesville, this gradient was company houses versus ground-rent) corresponded to the company-made ethnic enclaves within the town. Following Mulrooney's chart of housing factors, the workers' ethnicity would have determined which jobs they could have, which would have determined how much they were paid and, therefore, how much they could pay in rent (Figure 63). House rents were based on how much the house cost to build, so the



houses that were cheaper to rent were smaller and featured fewer amenities, such as plaster walls and basements. This combination created status hierarchies inscribed into the landscape of company towns. As bigger, better houses were only available to higher paying positions, the social status of the higher paying positions such as first class miner and foreman, which came with perks like these better housing options, was strengthened even further. The social benefits of purely economic categories had a significant impact on the ways that families and workers saw themselves. The move from mine laborer to miner represented a significant jump in economic status simply because of the higher pay associated with the unskilled vs skilled position; however, company town policies turned these otherwise simple economic considerations into major social capital by tying housing to job title.

These social distinctions created a miniature class hierarchy within the circumscribed boundaries of the company town social landscape. Cut off from larger society by geography and corporate controls, workers aspired to move ‘up’ the social ladder through the social mobility offered within the company town: moving into a higher paying job and the corresponding nicer houses. As workers struggled to gain the language skills, work experience, and number of years on the job in order to apply to become miners (or, after they had succeeded at becoming miners, to become foremen and mine inspectors), they stopped questioning or challenging the overall system: that they were all working class. The atmosphere of the company town, with its false sense of social and economic achievement through the use of job incentives such as nicer housing options, masked the large picture of inequality that coal mining created. The arrangement of the housing on the landscape encouraged this sense of attainment as achievement as

workers moved through the landscape by forcing the family members most susceptible to this message – the husband and wife – to physically pass the nicest workers' houses in order to carry out their regular errands, such as shopping at the company store, retrieving mail, and picking up one's pay. In this way, the company enforced workers' class status through the experience of the built environment.

Through landscape design, company town planners were able to instill a sense of socio-economic achievement. At Eckley, that achievement was embodied by those families who had successfully moved from the smallest and cheapest workers' houses on the eastern end of town into larger houses closer to the owners' houses on the western end of town. Oral histories reveal families' ultimate aspirations of moving to Main Street in Eckley, and census records show patterns of movement from Back Street and School Street to Main Street as a unidirectional flow. At Pardeesville, the limited number of company houses available forced families to adapt what they had. Families that were unable to acquire houses on Upper or Lower Streets instead chose to modify their houses to suit their needs as their needs changed. However, changes to these houses didn't really pick up until the age of welfare capitalism took over, which will be discussed in more detail later.

Another important aspect of the company town landscape is the naming and re-naming of streets or locations within the company town. The pattern of naming of Eckley's streets through time shows a deeper struggle of residents attempting to define their surroundings for themselves, with one major street and at least one minor street adopting colloquial names that later came to define those places – and change people's perceptions of them. Drawing on De Certeau's discussion of the power in naming places,

we can see that the change from South Street to Back Street represents an important turning point in the relationship between management and workers. Evidence from World War One draft cards indicates that this change was taking place even before the major emblems of corporate control – the company church and the company store – were removed. Although the road is referred to as ‘South Street’ in the 1873 D.G. Beers Atlas, 1917 World War I draft cards show residents variously referencing addresses on South and Back Streets. Sometime thereafter, the street came to be known as Back Street. With the retreat of company oversight, people in the town began changing the names of the places they encountered every day to better reflect their lived experience and knowledges of these spaces. But this change also comes with larger implications. While ‘South’ Street is largely a neutral, directional designation, ‘Back’ Street has the connotation of something inferior or less important. The shift in the identity of this street could be a reference to the increasingly marginality that the houses on Back Street experienced in the first decades of the 20th century, including their demolition by neglect and to facilitate strip mining. In this case, the term ‘Back Street’ could be a reflection of workers’ observations. The other potential is that this street had always been referred to as Back Street colloquially, possibly because it was home to the smallest houses in Eckley, and therefore parts of the poorest population in the town. In this case, the social engineering the town planners initiated in the 1850s had come to describe the landscape, literally.

By creating their own intra-company miniature class hierarchy, complete with inheritable class status, the company demonstrated to workers that their situation would improve through hard work and perseverance and effectively stifled criticism of the

nature of working class labor exploitation.<sup>69</sup> While this class status had little to no bearing on their status outside of the company town or, potentially, the anthracite region, this status did have important implications for the families who defined their social status according to these notions.

### *Gender*

One aspect of the company town that strengthened gender identities with the working community was the utilization of community water hydrants and wells. At Eckley, the single family houses had cold water piped directly into the summer kitchen sometime before 1915, but the majority of the houses in the town had no such luxuries. Residents of the double houses at Eckley would have had to fetch water from communal hydrants located throughout the town. A company map from the around the time of the insurance evaluation (1908-1915) shows a total of five communal pumps or hydrants: three on Main Street, one on School Street, and one on Back Street (Figures 64 and 65). One

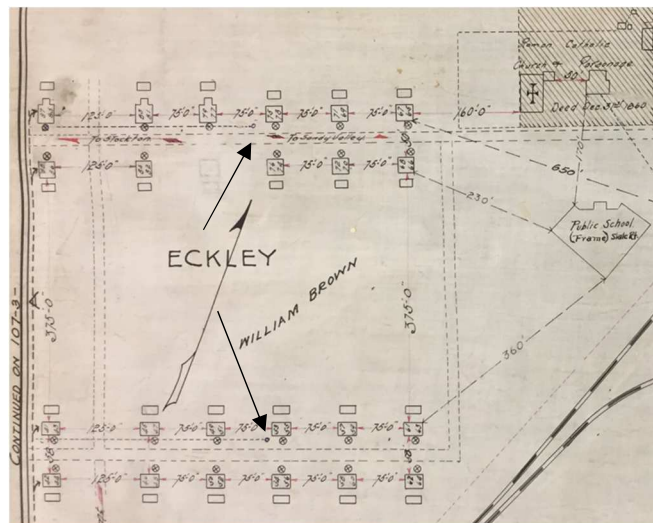


Figure 64. 1915 map of east Eckley. Arrows denote location of water hydrants on Main Street and Back Street. Adapted from Coughlin et al. 1915.

<sup>69</sup> Inheritable class status refers to the fact that, at Eckley as well as Pardeesville, the children of families on Main Street often retained those residences after their parents had died, especially during the 20th century. Additionally, the children of families on Main Street had greater access to the “material, cultural and genetic influences” that their socially successful parents had cultivated than their immigrant counterparts (Bowles and Gintis 2002:4).

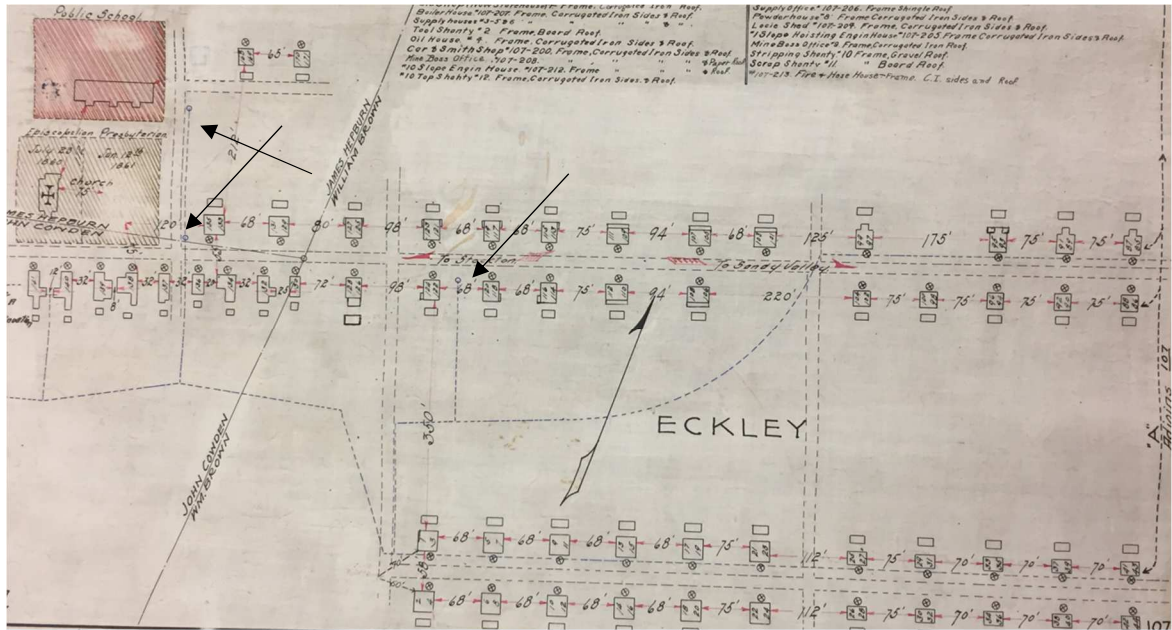


Figure 65. 1915 map of central Eckley. Arrows denote location of water hydrants on Main Street and School Street. Adapted from Coughlin et al 1915.

additional map illustrates that the hotel (which was later converted into a multi-family housing structure) had its own hydrant (Figure 66). Only a decade later in 1924, water

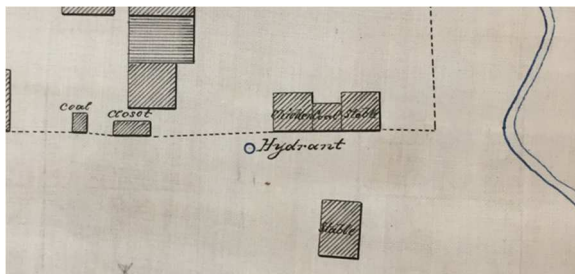


Figure 66. Undated map of Eckley with 'hydrant' labeled behind former hotel

was purportedly piped to all houses in the town. By 1931, the number of pumps has dwindled: only two are visible on Main Street and there are none on School or Back Streets. The two still present are

located near the locations of the previous community water pumps, indicating that these locations were likely adapted to serve a new purpose rather than representing the installation of a new water system. As water was now widely available to residents inside their own homes, these limited hydrants were likely retained for fire suppression purposes. Although water was eventually supplied to individual residences, the seventy years prior to this change would have meant trips to the water pump were a daily occurrence. Mulrooney's research in bituminous company towns found that pumps were

typically shared between four or five families (1989:16); at Eckley, these pumps would have been shared between groups of up to 24 families.

The social effects of the availability of water in a town cannot be overstated: this infrastructural design choice would have impacted nearly every family living in Eckley just about every day, with the majority of those carrying out the labor of hauling water being women and children. Because the domestic sphere was the woman's responsibility according to the social and gendered prescriptive literature from the time (Matthews 1987; see Beecher and Stowe 1869), the tasks related to cleaning, cooking, and laundry, as well as drawing bath water for working male relatives and boarders, would have fallen to the women in the household. In training young girls to one day manage their own households, girls helped their mothers haul water or took on the responsibility in its entirety for themselves. Due to the limited number of pumps, the physical and social routes that women took to reach the pump would have been etched into the cultural landscape of the town. In order to reach these pumps, women would have had to pass in front of, along side, and behind the houses of their neighbors – increasing the likelihood of social exchanges and interactions. Given that the neighbors whose houses they passed were also of their same ethnicity due to the ethnicity-based housing patterns within the town, this type of constant community interaction would have further strengthened the artificially-created ethnic enclaves. Furthermore, the time spent at the pump and the number of families sharing the same pump would have ensured that neighbors regularly found themselves waiting or pumping together. Although the limited number of pumps was likely a cost-saving measure when the town was constructed, this instance shows

how even the unconscious decisions made in the creation of the company town landscape had lasting repercussions for the workers who lived there.

The act of fetching water is also a gendered social role that would have reinforced girls' identities as young women who would one day be mothers and wives. As part of the suite of domestic responsibilities under the purview of the woman of the house, fetching water would have been an integral part of women's larger domestic duties. Involving girls and young women in this activity, then, trained and prepared them for the responsibilities they would have as adult women in that society. Therefore, hauling water would have been an activity that represented female gender roles and subsequently reinforced a feminine identity.

The families who used these water pumps would also have been aware that, at least by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, those who lived in the single family houses (the highest quality workers' houses available) had running water piped directly into their houses. This type of inequality would have further solidified the popular societal notion that immigrants were undeserving and unwanting of the types of amenities that 'Americans' had come to expect from their houses. One report from 1917 went as far as to say that providing "foreigners" the same type of amenities that needed to be supplied to "Americans" could be dangerous (Allen 1917:14). While we cannot know if the workers who hauled their water saw this arrangement as further proof of their 'other-ness' and another divide between themselves and 'Americans' (however that term is defined) or if workers internalized this identity, the fact remains that outside society saw them as 'others' for precisely these reasons. Hambidge's tour of the Italian area of Pardeesville included the following passage:

The little girls drudge early. We see one of them coming up an alley, carrying two pails of water which she has filled from the settlement well in front of the church... The child does not appear to be over six years of age, yet the burden she carries would be enough for one three times her years. This is the first evidence – of which we see more later – of the woman as the animal, the chattel, the thing to be possessed for its usefulness, as a piece of furniture, a cow, or a mule. A little later in life (not much later – six years is enough) this mite of a child will be, not married, but given and taken in marriage; and the certificate from the priest will be to her husband as a bill of sale – documentary evidence of possession [Hambidge 1898:825]<sup>70</sup>

Hambidge identifies this girl as belonging to a system in which she will be a child bride (a common piece of unfounded anti-immigrant propaganda used by nationalists and nativist activists at the time) simply because she is carrying water. The connection between the two ideas – that these families are backward or regressive because of their culture, and that their regressive culture is why they live in a house without running water – places the blame of racist housing practices squarely on the shoulders of the immigrants, rather than on the company who instituted the policies that trapped them there. Blaming the immigrant for their living conditions helps justify their mistreatment in society while exonerating the company of any responsibility for the treatment of their workers. Although likely done without malicious intent, the choice to not provide the socially-lowest, economically-poorest immigrants with the same infrastructural considerations as their native-born counterparts reinforced many of the negative social stereotypes that these same immigrants would have to fight to escape.

Unfortunately, little is known about the original water supply infrastructure in Pardeesville; however, archival documents indicate the presence of three wells that likely

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<sup>70</sup> It is important to note that although women – especially Italian women – in the anthracite region married earlier than their native-born counterparts (the median age for women’s first marriage was 26.1 nationally, while MacLean’s report notes that “girls marry before the age of 16 as a rule, especially among Italians”), Hambidge’s observations of a 6 year old bride are highly suspect and likely inflammatory anti-immigrant rhetoric rather than actual data (MacLean 1910:141; US Census Bureau 2004).



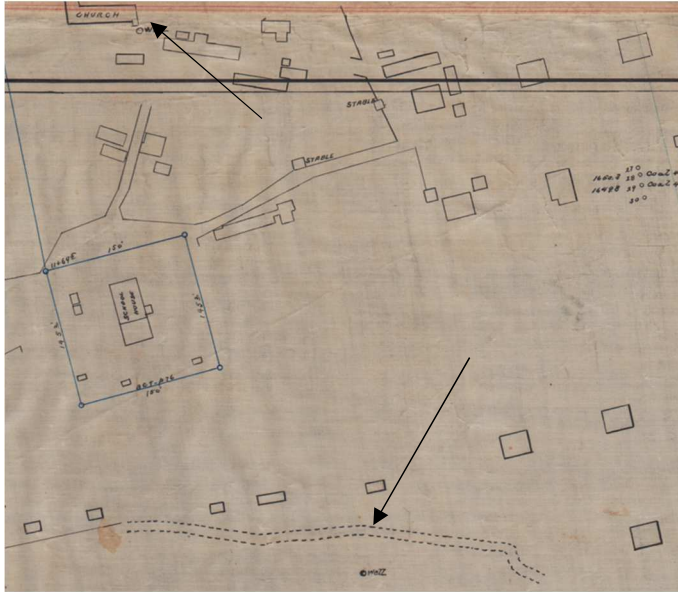


Figure 67. 1878 Map of Pardeesville. Wells denoted by arrows.

served the majority of the town. Hambidge's account as well as historical maps indicate that a well was present next to the church in the Italian worker-built enclave, although both the church and the well have long since been removed (Figure 67). It is likely that this was the only source of water for those

living in the Italian section as it is the only well marked on maps in that area. This well was located near the terminus of Upper Street, one of the two gridded streets of company houses in the settlement. A second well, which has also been removed, was located directly south of this first well and was likewise placed at the end of the row of formal, company-built houses in an area with other structures of an unknown function. A third

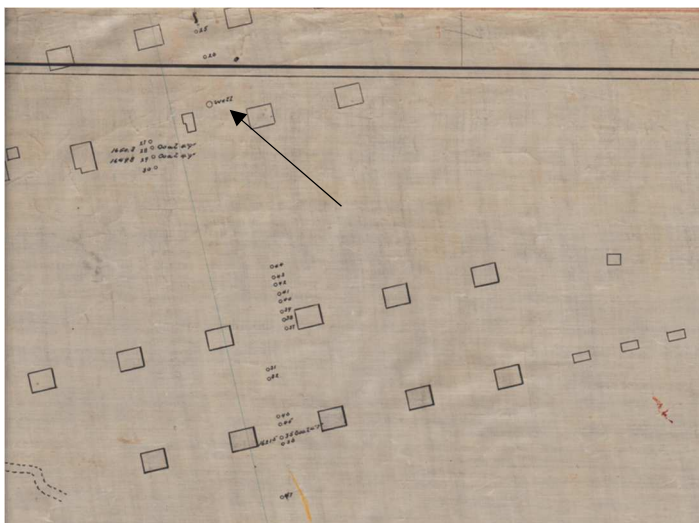


Figure 68. 1878 map of Pardeesville with well denoted by black arrow.

well is marked on the south side of Upper Street in the middle of the row of houses on a map from 1878, but the location of the well is obscured on the 1885 map due to damage to the document (Figures 68 and 69). Although there are no indications of

additional community pumps, wells, or other plumbing to specifically serve the company-built houses in Pardeesville, it is highly unlikely that a secondary company town built in the 1870s had water piped directly into homes (Mulrooney 1989).

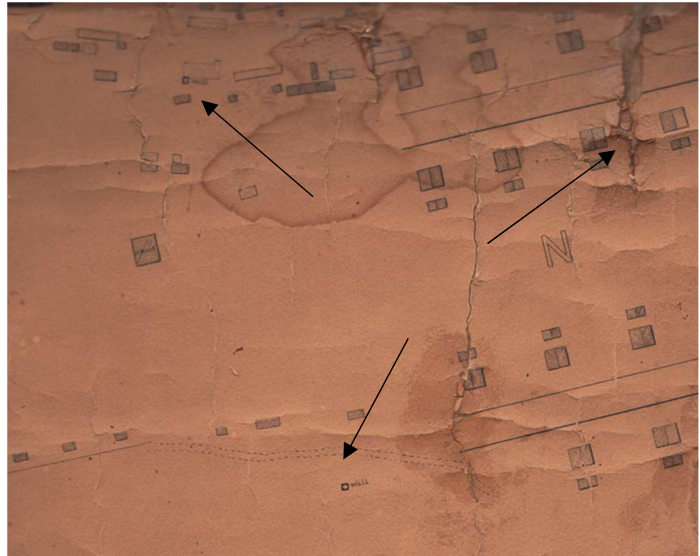


Figure 69. 1885 map of Pardeesville with two wells marked, third obscured by damage. Denoted by black arrows.

As in Eckley, the company-built worker houses at Pardeesville and their reliance on outdoor, community wells through at least the early 20<sup>th</sup> century would have ingrained a sense of community between residents who saw and interacted daily at the well. The act of fetching water and its cultural connotations as part of a woman's daily duties in maintaining her house would have added a gendered performance subtext to the task. Additionally, in the 20th century as the Progressive movement argued for more basic rights for the poor and working classes, including access to indoor plumbing, the act of fetching water would have taken on a lowered class or status connotation as being representative of those who did not have access to those technologies. In industrial housing, the lack of amenities was frequently associated with immigrants, who planners had deemed un-needing of certain conveniences. Although the population in company towns as a whole, as well as Pardeesville and Eckley in particular, was increasingly native-born, especially after the introduction of restrictive immigration quotas in the 1920s, such infrastructural configurations would have continued to depress the social status of families who lived in

these houses, while the homes of mine owners and other high-ranking officials in the company in nearby Lattimer easily boasted these comforts.

It is unknown whether the families in the worker-built Italian village dug the well themselves or whether the well pre-dated the establishment of the enclave there. Regardless, this well would have been one of the most important in Pardeesville. It served the entirety of the enclave – as many as 42 individual structures and at least that many families by the 1920s (Roller 2015:206). For comparison, the other two wells that served the double family houses in Pardeesville would have served between 20 and 26 families each. Although all women in Pardeesville would have been hauling water for their household, the lower number of people using the wells that served the double houses meant that these would likely have been in better shape than the well in the Italian village. Hambidge's account of the shanty village also mentions "this is the principal street of a settlement of the queerest structures ... there is no sewage system, and the alley is the dumping-ground for all offal. At every few steps of this winding, reeking way are little openings leading into other passageways" (1898: 824). His inclusion of these descriptors here, but not in his discussion of Lattimer or Pardeesville proper, indicates that this situation is not replicated in those places. His description implies the unsanitary nature of the town, and raises the possibility that the water from the well in the center of the settlement could have been contaminated due to the above-ground sewage system of the enclave. In all, this water and water drainage infrastructure (or the lack thereof) goes a step further and reinforces the idea that not only are the newly-arrived Italian migrants not worthy of piped water or indoor plumbing, but that they are also dirty and a scourge to native-born society. In this way, the presence of wells and indoor plumbing in

company houses informed workers' sense of gender identity, ethnic background, and class or social status.

Mining in general was and continues to be a male-dominated field. Women's interactions with the company are obfuscated but also painfully acute: without a husband or other male relative working at the mine, women, especially in the 19th century, frequently lost their housing. The situation became so dire, especially in the case of women widowed through their husbands' deaths in the mines, that a congressional investigation into anthracite company town management practices in the 1880s specifically interrogated mine owners and workers on the subject (United States Congress 1889). In that respect, women were essentially powerless over their own housing situation. However, the structure of the company town also intrinsically strengthened women's sense of self sufficiency and their aspirations for their families.

As mentioned previously, the company town environment provided workers and their families with the possibility of intra-town social mobility. While the obfuscation of power dynamics in the town was specious at best and coercive at worst, the possibility for workers to 'transcend' their working class origins to achieve a more middle class lifestyle in the houses on the western end of Main Street in Eckley or in the company-built houses in Pardeesville was too great to disregard. Because social and class status was regulated by the actions of the women of the household in addition to the job status of the (male) head of the household, women's influence on the class status of the family would have been equal to if not greater than the influence of their male counterparts (see Stanworth 1984; c.f. Goldthorpe 1983). In order to achieve and maintain their class standing, women would have made decisions on when and whether their children stayed in school

or went to work or if the family took in boarders, laundry, and/or other informal revenues to increase the household's income. The possibilities opened to women in terms of social achievement provided women with an immense measure of power within the family. Although contemporary accounts such as Hambidge's indicate that women were largely at the mercy of their husbands, these perspectives serve to diminish or deny the real social and economic impacts of women in the company town context.

One way that the company town social arrangement empowered women was through the possibility for home-generated incomes. Company housing policies in Eckley relied on a constant supply of families willing to house boarders, who were typically single men who had recently arrived in the town. Having families in town who were willing to house and feed boarders saved the company money by eliminating the need for them to build and manage boarding houses. Unsurprisingly, the company maintained its ethnic segregation policies even when placing boarders.

Other options for income women would likely have made decisions about include sending children to work. The types of work available to children were generally limited to industrial and agricultural jobs, where cheap, abundant labor was constantly in high demand. Agricultural jobs were seasonal, temporary, and informal arrangements in which teenagers and young adults, both men and women, were brought to a work site and subsequently paid based on a volume- or weight-based rate. One man who worked picking string beans as a teenager in the 1940s remembered a bus picking up people in Eckley and transporting them to farms in the Pocono Mountains (AF, interview 2018). Others have reported that picking wild huckleberries from stands in the hills and mountains around the anthracite region was a common summer job (GD, interview

2014). Farmers and fruit sellers benefitted from this arrangement, as it provided a labor force that could be expanded and contracted as needed, while mining families benefitted from the additional income during the traditionally slow summer months. The industrial jobs available to mining families in the anthracite region brought more dangers, but also more steady employment than the agricultural options. Industrial jobs for boys consisted of positions in the coal breaker above ground or in auxiliary jobs below ground, such as leading mules or opening and closing ventilation doors. Boys working in these positions were typically eight to 12 years old (Freedman 1994). Girls also went to work, this time in textile mills that began relocating to the region during 1880s to evade organizing labor forces in the Northeastern United States. Girls as young as five, but more typically between the ages of 11 and 21, worked in a variety of positions within the mills, including as weavers, spinners, twisters, and quillers (Stepenoff 1999; Sterba 1996). While some children left school late or even completed their studies through the eighth grade before joining the workforce to help support the family, other children weren't so lucky. Data from the census combined with oral histories indicate that in some instances, the eldest child left school early to being working – thereby allowing their siblings to stay in school. In both of the cases identified through oral histories, girls went into jobs at local textile mills and remained in these jobs well into adulthood. In both cases, the women never left home or married, and instead remained with their parents until they passed away (PS, interview 2014; United States Census Bureau 1920, 1930). This pattern occurred in both Eckley and Pardeesville, indicating that one's position in a primary company town did not shield them from similar levels of economic deprivation.

Another option open to families, though it was and continues to be rarely discussed, was the option to have wives work as well. Although women at and before the turn of the 20th century typically left the wage labor force once they were married, this was increasingly not the case through the 1940s and 1950s. Married women took jobs in textile and garment mills, as well as in cigar factories, as domestics, and as secretaries. Although the middle class ethos forbid married women from working outside the home, oral histories indicate that some amount of women in company towns did exactly that; however, in an interesting twist, women known to have been employed in wage labor are often listed as ‘not working’, ‘keeping house’, or ‘unemployed’ in the census, revealing the thin line between experienced class status and enacted, or public, class status.

These decisions about income and employment represent serious and impactful decisions made at an individual and household level based on families’ unique circumstances. However, it was the intentionality of company town planning and management that forced these decisions to happen. Varying rents and a social atmosphere that promoted competition for better housing encouraged families to engage in the consumption-driven markets that kept workers in the colliery. The clustering of company towns in remote regions was advertised as a selling point to textile manufacturers who sought an abundant and captive workforce. And the layout of the town and the ethnic divisions therein enabled employers to perpetuate their ethnic segregations through the use of borders. While women ultimately made their decisions about work and the household budget for a plethora of reasons, the role of the company town as a controlled and intentional industrial landscape is a major, if not always apparent, factor in those decisions.

### *Identity, Welfare Capitalism, and the Introduction of the 'New' Company Town*

Over time, management of the company town changed, and with it came a new way of imagining workers' relationship to the landscape as well as the company. Crawford (1995) outlined the ways that industrial company town management strategies changed during the Progressive Era. Companies, increasingly under pressure from reformers and legislators, moved from a form of corporate welfare that featured a paternalistic model of company-owned schools, churches, and houses to one that relied more on welfare capitalism and non-fiscal incentives for workers. Although many of the changes that took place were at the policy and management level, changes also appear on the landscape from this transformation. One of the major changes to occur was the removal or obfuscation of many of the parts of the landscape that reinforced the power of the company. Architecture became an important component of that agenda.

The shift to welfare capitalism was most apparent at the industrial site itself.

Workers' clubhouses became a popular addition within many industries, including the example of the Duplan's workers' clubhouse (Figure 70), which was used by

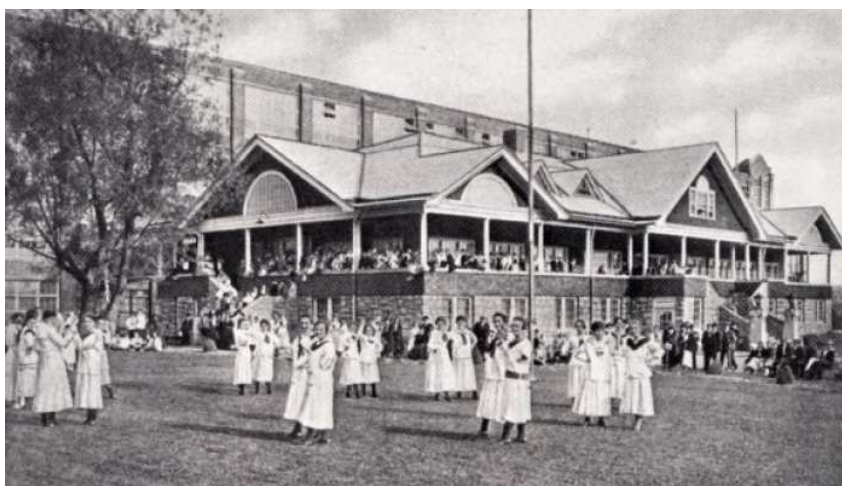


Figure 70. Duplan Silk Corporation workers' clubhouse, Hazleton, PA, circa 1918, depicting May Day celebrations. From Duplan Silk Corporation 1918.

women textile workers living in Pardeesville. These clubhouses sought to introduce



workers to a new aesthetic – one focused on middle class structures and values – that company owners could control the message, setting, and delivery of. Although promotional materials for these clubhouses show them full of eager and recreating workers, historians have indicated that, typically, these establishments became the domain of foremen and white-collar workers rather than a gathering place for workers from all social status (Littman 1998:89). While employers attempted to entice workers to engage with the clubhouses with a variety of promotions and offerings, architects found their attempts to “expose workers to upper- and middle-class decorative tastes in fact demarcated these landscapes as managerial territory, and thus discouraged worker use and enjoyment” (1998:89). The reason for corporate interest in conditioning worker culture was substantial: industrialists and reformers alike were greatly concerned “about the condition of immigrant neighborhoods around [their] plant[s]” (1998:93). Now lacking the absolute power over workers’ professional and personal lives that they had come to enjoy during the Gilded Era’s hallmark of corporate paternalism, reformers became concerned that the preservation of “Old World social practices and work habits would, without proper corporate intervention, inevitably lead workers to “join radical labor organizations like the IWW” and “become fertile soil of socialistic and anarchistic propaganda” (Littman 1998:93; Roberts 1920:224-225).

Industrialists began to realize that the structures of migration and labor control that they had used to effectively during the Gilded Age had now become a threat. Reflecting on why the company needed to be the site of workers’ re-direction to American standards of ethnic and class expectations, one sociologist involved in the effort remarked:

Their leisure hours are spent in the foreign-speaking colony; their associates are men of their own race; their economic, social and religious needs are met by organizations manned by men of their own nationality; the only window open to them by which they can look into the American world is in the plant, and at that window stands the boss. [Roberts 1920:207]

What behaviors employers could no longer force upon their employees, they reasoned, they would now coerce under the guise of leisure.

However, while substantial social and managerial changes were taking place in industries across America beginning in the 1880s, in the anthracite region, these practices remained largely unchanged until the 1920s and 1930s. I propose that coal mine owners largely kept to the system that had served them well for decades, with change only arriving after technological improvements and the conglomeration of the industry made the old system impractical. The decline in direct company control over the town also corresponds with a movement within the anthracite industry itself as smaller-scale producers were systematically bought out or forced out of business by the much larger companies that maintained control of both the coal mines and the railroads that shipped the coal. Scholars have widely acknowledged the role that technological innovations played in ending many of the patterns of worker abuses in coal mining. The advent of ‘electric mules,’ or electric rail cars to haul coal out of the mine eliminated the need for young boys to serve as mule drivers and tenders. Additionally, the advent of the coal preparation plant further diminished the need for breaker boys.<sup>71</sup> As the work was increasingly mechanized, the need for on-site management decreased. Although foremen and supervisors were still an integral part of the mining process, the days of coal mining

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<sup>71</sup> Although this technology was invented between the 1890s and 1900s, it did not become widely adopted until the 1910s. Eckley’s breaker was converted into a washery in 1911 and the coal was then taken to Hazleton for sizing and sorting (Albert E. Peters Associates 1972).

(and railroad) family dynasties who lived at the mines, personally arbitrated with striking workers, and directly oversaw their businesses – the days of the supremacy of the Pardees, Markels, and Coxes – was drawing to an end. In this case, then, workers' ability to define their landscape for themselves stemmed not from some struggle over definitions, but rather from an outmoding of the power that had designated the name. It was only once these changes became convenient that companies began to adopt them – thereby explaining the implementation delay between the 'new' company town and Progressive Era movements and signs of actual change in Northeastern Pennsylvanian company towns.

As the 'new' company town model emphasized changing behaviors at the jobsite rather than on the homefront, changes began to take place in the company towns and villages that supplied and housed industry's lifeblood: its workers. Less attention was paid to the quality and upkeep of the housing stock as many companies sought to offload the properties by selling them to their tenants. In cases where workers had built their own houses on land rented from the company, residents were informed that they either needed to purchase the land or move their house off of it so that the land could be sold to someone else. The last vestiges of the monopolistic company store system, which had been outlawed in Pennsylvania in the mid-1880s but continued to live under private operation in some towns, also began to disappear. These changes, and others, found their way to Eckley and Pardeesville. The ways that the 'new' company town movement and the introduction of welfare capitalism as an organizing principle helped to hide, but not dismantle, the structures of power embedded in these two towns will be explored in more depth.

## *Eckley*

Even as corporate paternalism was coming to an end elsewhere in American industry as the ‘new’ company town and a preference for welfare capitalism arose, the mining companies of the Pennsylvania anthracite region continued their tried-and-true methods of worker appeasement and control. On February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1890, Coxe Brothers and Company began construction on a building to house the Eckley Cornet Band. This building would eventually become the home of Eckley’s four separate company town bands. Industrial bands in the US context date back to the 1850s (LeCroy 1998:249). Bands, as well as fraternal organizations such as the AOH, which had an active branch in Eckley around the turn of the century, were all aspects of a larger effort to “foster a sociocultural climate that would make manifest the parent company’s continual benevolence to its employees” (LeCroy 1998:252). Bands served as an important component of industrial company

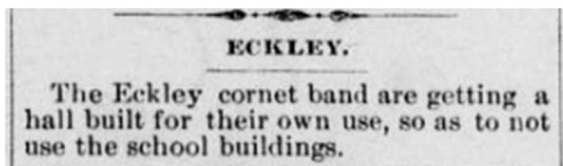


Figure 71. Newspaper report about Eckley band house. From FT 6 February 1890.

towns’ amenities, where were intended to convince workers that although wages were low, their quality of life was better

than that they would otherwise experience outside of the company town. In theory, these amenities would foster a culture of goodwill towards the company and thereby prevent workers from going on strike or organizing unions (Figure 71). However, the band house would come to represent one of the last symbols of corporate control and investment, as the turn of the century brought new ideas about companies’ relationship to its workers. The 1915 insurance valuation, made just 25 years after the band house was built, details that the structure is now in “very poor condition,” including noting that “clapboards are

broken and cracked, many are missing. Sheathing is rotting at base. Roof leaks in places. [And] Building is not painted” (Coughlin et al. 1915:612). Although the band house was one isolated building, the treatment of this building is indicative of a larger trend in town maintenance and management ideology that took over during the 1920s and 1930s.

One of the more impactful changes that took place in Eckley during this period of transition to a welfare capitalist system was the obfuscation of power across the landscape. Corporate paternalism had required the company to be in a position of fiscal and moral authority over workers in order to justify its control of the built as well as social environments. Under a welfare capitalism model, the company sought to entice workers into behaviors the company deemed appropriate rather than force them to obey. One way to convey the company’s magnanimity to workers was through the abolishing of the symbols of power that had dominated the social and physical landscapes of the town for decades. At Eckley, the company store was torn down in 1935 (although the store had been privatized in the 1880s and was no longer operated by the company), the Presbyterian church was torn down around 1925, and the Episcopal church was removed around 1938. The Sharpe House, an impressive two and a half story Gothic Revival style house located at the highest point in town and purpose built to house one of the town’s owners, was subdivided into two rental residences sometime between 1927 and 1931. Eventually, the town’s post office franchise was also relocated to the Sharpe House. While removing and/or modifying the institutions that had defined company control over the town physically distanced the town from its paternal origins, the company at Eckley maintained ownership of the workers’ house. In this way, the company still maintained ultimate power over workers’ lives, yet the physical reminders of that arrangement were

increasingly invisible. The transformation of the Sharpe House, by far the grandest owner's house at Eckley, into rental units and then into a civic building, is the most obvious example of power obfuscation. Although ownership of the house has not changed, the symbolic gestures made by the company, first that the house is now a home to workers, and then in the service of workers, shows how workers might come to the belief that this shift in management ideologies granted workers more rights and freedoms, instead of maintaining the status quo in a subtler way.

While the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s represented a shift in company town management through the removal of vestiges of company control, the physical landscape was also shaped in ways that meant to acknowledge the increasing supremacy of the worker. At Eckley, the company installed 10 street lights in 1924 at a cost of \$2,000.<sup>72</sup> The installation of the street lights represents an expense bore by the company for the benefit of workers with little to no direct benefit for the company. This type of welfare capitalism now represents the most common type of corporate welfare seen in industry today. Five years later, the company ran electricity to all of the houses in town. While some tenants had borne the expense of running electricity to their residences already (likely the wealthier households that could afford the time and expense associated with redirecting current from the existing infrastructure and wiring their houses themselves), the company's gesture aligns yet again with the image of the magnanimous corporation that provides for their workers, thereby eliminating the need for these workers to organize to fight for their rights. Following this theme, in 1946, the coal company at Eckley leased land in the center of town to workers to be used as the site of a recreation center.<sup>73</sup> The

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<sup>72</sup> These street lights were removed in preparation of the Molly Maguire movie filming.

<sup>73</sup> The building was leased to the workers, but the company retained the land.

Eckley Sports and Social Club was born, although it offers little more than an enclosed space for people to meet. Additionally, its legal rights and the length of its lease are still in question as the company never provided a paper document of the arrangement.

These changes largely coincided with the decline of underground extraction and the rise of surface (strip) mining – further supporting the observation that changes were largely undertaken because of a shift in the industry itself rather than from internal or external pressure. As the work became increasingly mechanized and, after World War I, the number of jobs necessary to maintain the industry decreased, the importance of the worker continued to decrease. At Eckley, parts of the town were strip mined as residents began to face the truth: workers might no longer be under the direct control of the company, but the company still valued profits over worker welfare. When George Huss granted Paramount Studios the one year lease on the town, he permitted the company to make significant changes to residents' houses, including covering the main road in dirt and gravel, burying power and telephone lines, and covering more economic and efficient cladding with clapboard. Local lore states the Huss intended to strip mine the town once Paramount was finished filming, further underscoring the actual importance of workers in the age of welfare capitalism. The establishment of the museum at Eckley is likely the only force that saved the town from ultimate destruction.

### *Pardeesville*

Pardeesville experienced a similar separation from corporate control, but the process played out very differently from their counterparts of Eckley. While the companies at Eckley obfuscated the power relations within the town but still sought to keep their

primacy, the company at Pardeesville abandoned the prospect of maintaining power entirely. As was more common at company towns in the anthracite, the company at Pardeesville took steps to divest workers' houses in the 1930s and 1940s. At Pardeesville, the properties were transferred to the Hazle Realty Company by the coal company in 1935, who then sold them to their tenants. Interestingly, although the company was relinquishing control of the properties, they still sought to maintain some of the social controls over labor they had enjoyed as landlords: deeds from the Hazle Realty Company to owners dated 1940 specify that the new property owners, "prior to 1946...the grantees will not make, manufacture, keep, sell or permit or suffer to be sold, or kept upon the demised premises any intoxicating liquor or beverages, or keep or maintain any still or device to make or manufacture intoxicating liquors" (emphasis in original; Hazle Realty Co. to George A. Berish et ux, deed dated Dec. 17, 1940). Patchtowns throughout the anthracite region had specifically forbidden the sale of alcohol on company grounds. The preservation of this rule for five years after the sale of the property into private hands is as much of an enigma as it is a perpetuation of company efforts to control by force the behavior of its workers.

Families in the Italian village sought to improve their houses in ways that made them more similar to their company-built counterparts. Roller's work at Pardeesville shows how the Italian village was physically transformed through the regularization of houses and the removal of as many as 75% of houses in order to imitate the suburban-aesthetic that became popular in the 1940s. Other families, rather than move to company-built houses on Upper and Lower Streets, chose to purchase and build new houses in the 1940s and 1950s on newly-minted nearby Pardeesville Road. Families in the company



houses in Pardeesville, on the other hand, sought to move to into the company town proper (instead of a satellite town) or moved out of the anthracite region altogether.

The construction of Pardeesville Road is itself another example of the ways in which company town life changed during the adoption of welfare capitalism. In 1938, soon after the company had transferred the land and houses in Pardeesville to Hazle Realty in order to sell them, the company removed the road connecting Pardeesville to Lattimer and built a road that connect Pardeesville directly to the main route to Hazleton. This was also the year that the town's name changed from 'Lattimer No. 2' to 'Pardeesville,' and a post office was established in the town (Roller 2015:335). Figuratively, Pardeesville was effectively freed from its corporate origins and allowed to develop its own identity away from Lattimer. Although the company retained control of the modes of production and many of the residents' jobs, the liberation of Pardeesville can be viewed as an attempt to pacify worker concern about corporate control while retaining financial control – arguably the most important factor in the welfare capital ideology of labor management.

### Conclusion

This analysis of the ways the landscape shapes people and, in is turn, shaped has shown that seemingly inconsequential decisions, such as the placement of water pumps and wells, or the decision to let new immigrants build their own houses rather than supply company-built ones, had long-lasting and deep repercussions for the ways that people formulated their identities as immigrants, women, and workers. A close reading of the built environment shows how the landscape was an irrefutable role in identity formation

and retains great influence in the process of identity negotiation. The examples of these two company towns, Eckley and Pardeesville, shows how different types of company towns and different methods of managing town growth (company-built vs. worker-built houses) can create landscapes with different meanings.

The section has also showed how changes occurring at a national level, including changes in industry practices and definitions of social attainment (such as the rise of the American middle class and the invention of the American suburb) have physical manifestations on the town landscape. Industrial shifts like the end of independent coal operator moved coal mine owners and managers further away from the landscapes they used to exert power, thereby diminishing their control over the landscape and strengthening workers' ability to shape and define their environment. Social and fiscal shifts occurring in America at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century drove workers in company towns to begin viciously and legally protecting their positions within the intra-town social hierarchy. Miners, whose status as 'middle-class' workers was solidified by their place on the landscape within the company town, used town planning and its embedded social messages to reinforce their claims to a middle class identity, despite their lack of access to one of the central components of the middle class: property.<sup>74</sup> Later, workers transformed their company houses in order to more closely align with the standards of the epitome of 1950s middle class attainment: the suburb. Roller (2015) shows how company town home owners used a variety of methods to transform their industrial houses into suburban oases, including the addition of vinyl siding and the combination of both sides

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<sup>74</sup> Scholar Lewis Corey (Louis C. Fraina) defines the middle class as "the class of independent small enterprises, owners of productive property from which a livelihood is derived" and that those who were part of "the masses of propertyless, dependent salaried employees" were not part of the middle class social group (1937:141).

of the double house into one residence to fulfill societal expectations about space and privacy.

## Chapter 8. Conclusion

### Introduction

The identity formation of migrant, working class women in Pennsylvanian anthracite company towns was shaped and negotiated through the built environments in which they lived as well as the material culture that they consumed in their daily lives in response to cultural ideologies on consumption and appropriate class behaviors. This dissertation has explored the forces that shaped these women's construction of their own identities within the context of American society and the ways that women responded to these forces. Women in these town simultaneously navigated ideological and architectural influences that shaped their perceptions of themselves. Their identities as women, as migrants, and as members of the working class were under constant change, with different broader influences, such as the cult of domesticity, impacting multiple forms of identity at once. However, material evidence indicates that these women were pursuing a middle class identity through their consumption habits, which were often in-line with the cultural recommendations for middle class American women in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Material and documentary evidence also indicates that women continued to foster their ethnic identities by maintaining social networks and membership in ethno-religious organizations. By adopting an intersectional approach in the analysis of identity formation, this dissertation has presented new opportunities to understand the competing and, at times, contradictory interests of women in these situations.

This chapter will begin with a short review of the ways that material culture and the built environment reflect and impact identity formation. I will then present two

models depicting tiers of interaction in order to explain the multiple and complex relationship between the different social actors within company towns. The first of these models will explore how materials and services moved and were reciprocated within the structure of the company town environment. This model details some, though not all, of the physical interactions between industrial society, the coal company, the company town, and the household. The second model examines the ideological relationships between these four elements to discuss how the process of ideological transfer between each constituent of the company town system. Both models aim to synthesize information presented in this dissertation by charting how these different forms of evidence can be read together to better understand the process of identity formation in Pennsylvania anthracite company towns.

### *Multiple Identities, Multiple Roles*

The reality of women's lives in the anthracite region meant that they were forced to adopt multiple roles, including roles that were at odds with the gendered standards set for middle class women. In response to their economic realities as members of the working classes, women in the anthracite region negotiated their class and gender status by selectively presenting their identities. Such strategies are seen exercised by women in the omission of reporting their employment to census takers, the sending of children into coal mines and textile mills, and the pursuit of middle class dish assemblages. Adopting an intersectional approach allows a unique perspective that captures the competing influences within women's lives. This intersectional approach is further complemented by a focus on an archaeological remains that illuminates how individuals internalized and

responded to the cultural and ideological forces in their lives. A synthesis of documentary evidence and archaeological material culture reveals that women were actively pursuing middle class cultural standards through their adoption of middle class gender roles, such as not working for wages outside the home, serving as the spiritual leader for the household, and dressing themselves in class-regulated accessories. Additionally, women also continued to express aspects of both an American identity as well as their ethnic identities. While the extent to which these changes represent free choice or represent the coercive pressures of mainstream society is unclear, the resulting shift in consumptive habits is clear.

### *Architecture and Identity*

While women were responding to outside cultural influences on their identities (as reflected in the consumption of specific forms of material culture), women were also being influenced by, and exerting their own influences on, the built environment. The coal company was able to control aspects of workers' identities by controlling the naming of spaces, the practice of establishing ethnic enclaves within the town, and manipulating where workers lived and what amenities they had access to. In turn, workers used the layout of the town, including the deep but narrow house lots and the communal water hydrants, to congregate and share information that helped them survive the industrial environment. Workers were also able to use the space of the houselot and the structure of the house itself to express their own (at times aspirational) identities. Families enriched soils in order to foster more productive subsistence gardens; they clad their houses with Insul-brick and vinyl siding to save money, improve their quality of life, and appeal to

the middle class American suburb aesthetic; and they built additions that enabled them to have more single-function rooms, wall papered walls, and later removed walls to imitate the popular open floor plans. The built environment served as both a force for control and a force for self-definition, agency, and self-expression.

### *Tiers of Interaction*

Women's identity formation was influenced by a variety of factors both within and outside of their control. Industrializing American society, coal companies, the company town, and the household all exerted various influences on each other. In order to increase clarity, the discussions of interactions at the material level will be presented separately from a discussion of interactions at the ideological level. However, it is important to recognize that oftentimes the material and the ideological are inextricable. Further, although these models present several forms of interaction between structures at different levels within society, these models are in no way intended to be a comprehensive review of goods, services, and ideologies that impacted workers' identities. Several influences, such as the roles of the Catholic church and ethnic fraternal organizations, have been excluded from this model. There are dozens if not hundreds of other interactions that could be included in these model; instead, these models are intended to present the interactions that I determined to be most vital to understanding the process of identity formation for migrant working class women, in particular.

### *Material Tiers of Influence*

The material tiers of influence model documents the movement of goods and services between industrial society, the coal company, the company town, and workers' households (Figure 72). This cycle of movement was necessary for the continued

## **Material Tiers of Influence**

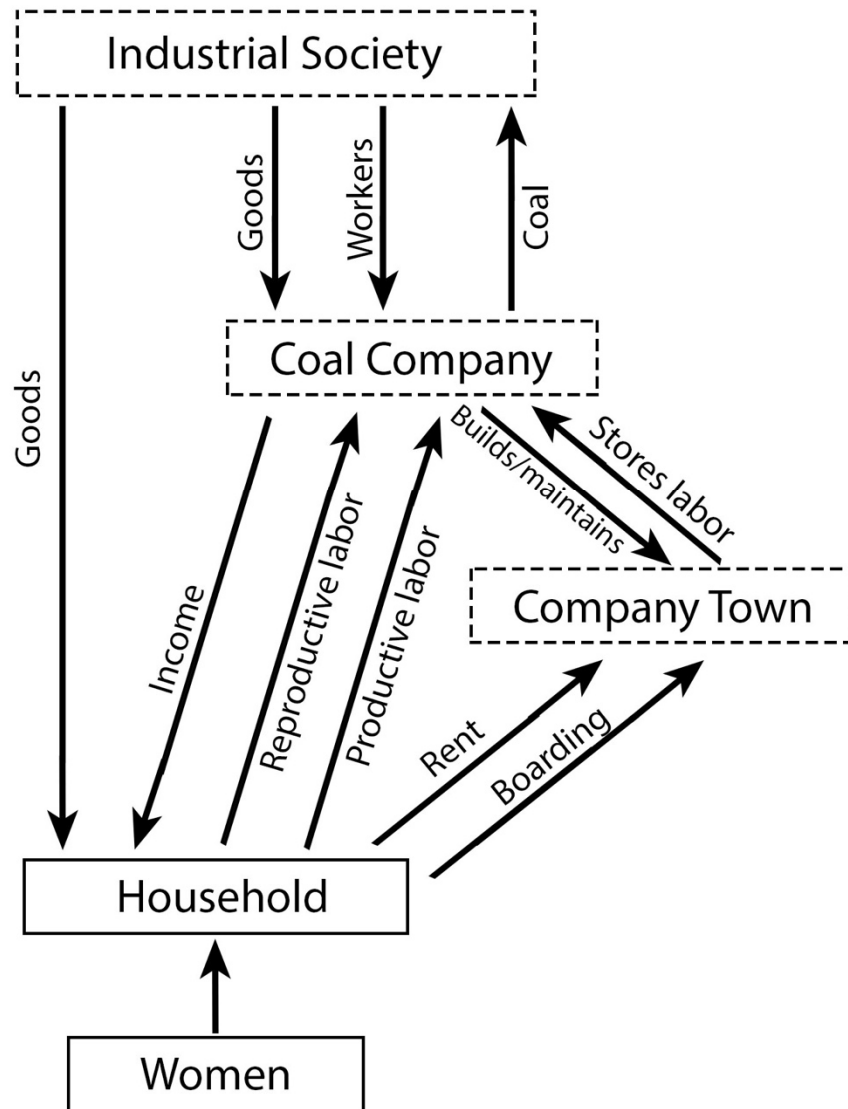


Figure 72. Material tiers of influence model depicting the movement of goods and services in anthracite company towns.



operation of the coal industry. The removal or extensive modification of any of these relationships could result in the destabilization of the coal company.

These relationships operate as interconnected systems of dependence. Industrial society required coal for a variety of purposes, including industrial, domestic, and military applications. In exchange for providing coal, industrial society provided goods to be consumed by both the coal company and by households. This interaction created demand for goods produced by other industries, thereby ensuring the continued prosperity of the American (and international) capitalism system. The other primary material interaction was the supply of workers from industrial society to coal companies. Political, social, and economic forces that were enabled and perpetuated by industrial society supplied American industries, including the coal mining industry, with a bountiful labor supply. In unskilled trades, including aspects of the Pennsylvania anthracite coal mining trade, companies were able to use this abundance in order to keep wages low and production high. Other factors not captured here, including international advertising for workers, chain migration, forced conscription, civil unrest, and other influences additionally shaped the composition and rate of arrival of workers, especially those from foreign countries.

Coal companies relied on goods and workers supplied by the broader industrial society, but they also needed additional materials and services that were provided by the company town and by households. In return for building and maintaining the company town, the company town provided coal companies with a repository for the labor that coal companies received from industrial society. Without company towns, coal

companies would not have been able to maintain artificially high levels of unemployment necessary to depress wages and break strikes.

Even more vital to the operation of the coal mining company was the receipt of productive and reproductive labor from households inside the company town. Coal companies relied on productive labor (in the form of workers) to extract coal as well as on reproductive labor to supply more workers for the mining operation. In exchange for providing these forms of labor, households received an income from the coal company. This money was used to purchase the goods that industrial society offered and which workers used to convey their identities. In some cases, these goods were used by members of the household (including women) to negotiate their identity. The consumption of specific goods could be leveraged to claim membership in certain social groups.

Households also used the income they received in exchange for their labor to pay rent to the company town (and, by extension, the company). This rent money was used to support the continued operation of the company town. Additionally, the household often provided boarding for workers in the company town, which generated additional forms of income for working class families. Additionally, by having the household provide boarding, it prevented companies from needing to build additional houses and promoted marriage amongst the working population, which meant that workers had greater responsibilities and were therefore less likely to quit or put their job at risk.

This series of interactions enabled the coal mining industry to thrive for over a century in Northeastern Pennsylvania. However, this system was not self-sustaining. In reality, multiple ideological constructs undergirded the company town system by

encouraging certain behaviors (often ones that aligned with company interests) while dissuading other behaviors under the guise of identity-based behaviors. These manipulations often succeeded at appeasing both workers' desires for social fulfillment and their employers' desire for a stable and docile workforce.

### *Ideological Tiers of Influence*

Company towns adapted and relied upon multiple ideologies present within American society writ large to maintain control over the workforce and to ensure steady production and profits. The ideologies within the coal company towns shaped workers' understandings of society and their place in it. The ideological tiers of influence model

explores some of the ideological influences on workers' identity formation in Pennsylvania anthracite company towns (Figure 73).

## Ideological Tiers of Influence

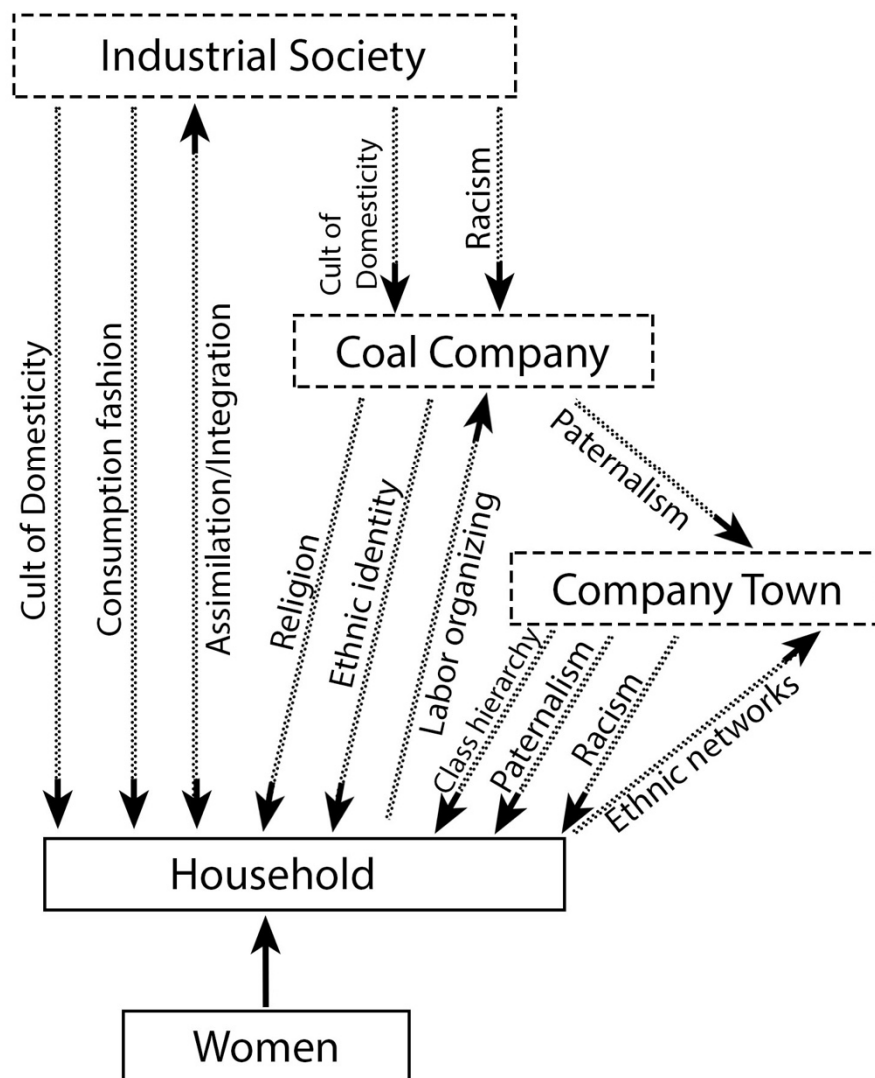


Figure 73. Ideological tiers of influence model depicting the transfer of ideological concepts between different levels of the company town environment.

One of the most influential ideologies for migrant working class women in anthracite company towns was the cult of domesticity. A Victorian era ideal born out of the religious revival movement in the 1820s, the cult of domesticity explicitly outlined what behaviors were proper and improper for American women. Although the cult of

domesticity was specifically geared for middle and upper class women, working women were repeatedly held to its standards by society. Women who did not fulfill the tenants of the cult of domesticity, for whatever reason, were open to social abuse. This pressure led many women to live a hybrid life in which they performed aspects of a middle class domestic lifestyle and aspects of a working class lifestyle. The cult of domesticity shaped women's ideas about their ethnic identity as well as their class status. By pursuing the material goods advocated by the cult of domesticity, women could define themselves as belonging to the identity that the cult of domesticity represented: white, middle class American women. This presented issues that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Although the cult of domesticity did work to shape women's consumption choices by approving of certain products, consumptive fashions extended beyond just the items specified by the cult of domesticity. The rapid growth of the advertising industry after World War I saw the creation of consumer demand through psychological manipulation (see Bernays 1928). Consumption was transformed into a way to *create* identities rather than just express them. The adoption of faux materials meant to mimic middle class goods, such as plastic and glass gems and pressed decorative glass vessels, was an outgrowth of this attempt to live a middle class identity through the consumption of items that were reminiscent of middle (and upper) class social and economic attainment.

Instructions on what items did or did not qualify as fulfilling a gendered middle class identity came directly to working class households from industrial society and advertising agencies within that society; however, coal companies were similarly impacted by broader societal conceptions of what women's proper place in society was according to the ideology of the cult of domesticity. The ubiquity of this social movement

meant that even if individual women did not want to participate in the ideology, they often had little recourse due to other structural limitations. The coal companies defined coal mining as men's work and forbade women from working in the mines or the collieries, despite a long history of women's involvement in mining (see Mercier and Gier 2006). Coal companies also promoted the traditional family model through their practice of providing company houses to families rather than single men. In this way, the cult of domesticity not only shaped women directly through social cues, but also shaped women's identities indirectly by impacting the institutions women interacted with.

In addition to the cult of domesticity, industrial society also transferred its racist beliefs to coal mining companies. The loose forms of ethnic segregation that many companies imposed on their inhabitants were borne of larger, national anti-immigrant movements. However, coal companies were also able to benefit from this arrangement: by keeping the different ethnicities separated and fostering resentment between them, the company could decrease the likelihood that the different groups would stand together to oppose the company as one.

Coal companies' racism and segmentation of the working community were incorporated as part of a larger paternalist ideology that was imposed up on the company town. The company town itself was the reification of paternalist ideals on the landscape. But the company's operation of the town – from the running of the company store to the selection of priests – actively worked to maintain their paternalistic ideology within the company town.

The paternalism transferred from the coal company to the company town was subsequently transferred to the household. Paternalistic ideals determined what kinds of

houses certain people could live in, what lessons they learned in school, and the messages of the sermons in their churches. The paternalist method of control also instilled values such as racism and class hierarchy on to the households through the layout and control of the town. This racism and class hierarchy manifested in ethnically segregated subsections within company towns. In response, households established informal ethnic support networks that enabled them to cope with excessive company control and abuses.

The final factor of identity formation is the two way relationship between households and broader industrial society on the topic of assimilation and integration. While society pushed migrants to assimilate into the social and cultural patterns of American life, migrants more often blended American expectations with their own ethnic traditions. This transmission of ideologies flowed both ways as migrants introduced America to Old World lifeways and developed new, hybrid identities for both.

### Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the material and architectural expressions of identity formation amongst immigrant, working class women in anthracite company towns. It has found that workers' identities were heavily shaped by the physical and ideological environments in which they lived. However, amidst this backdrop of corporate subjugation and exploitation, women used their identities to manipulate the systems of power they had been located in in order to create opportunities and gain autonomy over their own lives. The use of gendered, class-based material culture enabled working class women to transcend the limitations placed upon them by their economic realities. The four primary roles of women discussed in Chapter 3 (mothers, ministers, managers, and

mothers) reveals the ways that women used socially-expected behaviors to gain respectability, which was in turn weaponized by women on strike picket lines. Women also went beyond consumption into the manipulation of their domestic environments in order to create homes and house lots that reflected middle class aesthetics while fostering social and economic independence from the company. The use of home decorations, the modification of homes in concert with changing class ideals, and the use of home-based food production allowed women to solidify their identities for an outside audience while gaining and maintaining control of the home within the context of the company-owned corporate landscape. While the men in the anthracite region were exploited year after year, generation after generation through coal company policies (Roller 2015), women found ways to elevate themselves within the confines of their gendered roles to pursue the aspirational identities they chose to claim for themselves.

In many ways, the forces that shaped workers' identities historically continue to shape workers' identities today. Understanding the origins of these influences can help explain the modern state of peoples' identities in the anthracite region. Women in the anthracite region continue to practice these forms of identity leverage and aspirational identity through consumption. As industry has declined or collapsed entirely, women have reverted back to their roles as mothers, ministers, managers, and matrons to regain influence over the domestic lives of anthracite families and to dictate and guide their futures. Although the forms of material culture and the specific gender roles of women have continued to shift with changing times, women in the anthracite region maintain their positions of power within the family, in large part due to a historical legacy of power which their mother, grandmothers, and great grandmothers cultivated in the dirty,



unforgiving company towns of Northeastern Pennsylvania in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## Epilogue: Fifty Years of Failures

Although Pardeesville, like hundreds of other company towns in the Northeastern Pennsylvanian anthracite coal fields, was divested by the coal company in the 1930s and 1940s, it never escaped the power structures of the company town. The economic and civic realities of the region that led to the establishment of the company towns in the first place – the rugged and rural nature of the landscape, the lack of infrastructure, the dearth of alternative employment options – were forgotten, the lessons unlearned. The impacts of those mistakes continue to be felt in the region today and have fundamentally shaped the social realities of the area in ways that are self-destructive.

For a short time during World War II, Northeastern Pennsylvania was redeemed. Demand for coal skyrocketed to fuel the Allied War Machine and prosperity returned to the coal patch towns. Spared from the draft because of the vital need for raw materials, men in the anthracite region were finally living the imagined realities that they had been building for themselves for decades: families purchased their houses, sent their kids to private Catholic schools, turned their subsistence gardens into suburban lawns, bought brand new cars off the lot and filled their homes with sounds from newly purchased radios. As home owners, consumers tapped into the constantly expanding markets of cheap and flimsy goods. As the residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania became patriotic Americans whose labor was vital to the survival of the country and the world, the coal mining families of the anthracite region had demonstrated to themselves as well as to the rest of the country that they, too, had achieved their American Dreams of being white, middle class American men and women.

For most, that dream would be short lived. Anthracite production plummeted in 1949 and never fully returned. Families, many now trapped in the region by mortgages, were forced to send working husbands and brothers to New Jersey to work in factories during the week. The hardships brought about during this period for families and communities in the anthracite region are just now beginning to be academically assessed (see Keil and Keil 2014, Wolensky et al. 2002). Families that had been secure in their identities as middle class suddenly found themselves in the same socioeconomic situations that their parents and grandparents had struggled to escape. Despite the fact that consumption and the manipulation of company town geography had portrayed workers as members of the middle class, that status was contingent on the coal industry's continued maintenance of that mirage. When the mines closed, workers were confronted with the fact that the social and economic attainment and stability they thought they had achieved by joining unions, the church, and ethnic fraternal organizations were not enough to sustain their communities when the coal industry crumbled. Each of these institutions, in turn, betrayed the people of Northeastern Pennsylvania. The continued presence of the textile industry softened the blow of the contraction of the coal industry to an extent, but the textile industry, too, largely left the anthracite region during the Reagan administration's turn to neoliberal trade policies. In an instant, families in the coal region discovered that their existence was measured in relation to anthracite, and when the anthracite was gone, the country believed them to be gone, too.

The country failed the people of the anthracite region in a multitude of ways in the second half of the twentieth century. The ethnic organizations that had provided companionship and mutual assistance to migrants for decades were largely unable to

financially assist families during the Great Depression and the accompanying economic slump of the 1930s. Their weaknesses exposed, these organizations were eventually replaced by national, anonymous corporations that offered insurance policies with legal backing (Bodnar 1981:14).

The repeated failings of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) union in the anthracite region proved to be an even bigger embarrassment than the failings of the ethnic societies. Twelve workers drowned in the Knox Mine Disaster of 1959 when the Susquehanna River broke through the roof of a mine that had tunneled beneath it. It took three days to plug the hole. The subsequent investigation found that the accident had happened because company officials had forced workers to mine to within 19 inches of the river, despite safety regulations stipulating that no mining could take place within 35 feet of a river. Additionally, the investigation found that the District 1 President of the UMWA was a secret owner in the mine company and that the Knox Coal Company had been founded by a reputed mafia boss. With the national spotlight now solidly focused on the anthracite region, the ubiquitous corruption within the anthracite union as well as the anthracite industry as a whole were exposed (Wolensky et al. 1999).

In an ironic twist, the Knox Mine Disaster, a tragedy caused in part by a corrupted union official, would spur an even greater and wider-reaching tragedy in the anthracite region that further highlighted the inadequacies of the union. In 1945, with the US still embroiled in World War II, President Truman ordered the nation's anthracite mines to be seized under the authority of the War Labor Disputes Act in order to avert a strike (Kihss 1978). In 1946, the UMWA negotiated with the government on behalf of workers and secured an employer-financed per ton tax on coal that would be used to finance anthracite

miners' pensions and health benefits. This fund, known as the Anthracite Health and Welfare Fund and Pension Plan, tied workers' pensions to the market for anthracite, which was already on a decline before the war. In 1954, pension benefits were reduced by 50% (Myers 1956). By 1981, the fund required financial assistance to maintain its obligations. By 1997, anthracite pensions were down to \$30 per month, at which point the federal government intervened and raised pensions to \$90 per month (Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation [PBGC] 1997). For comparison, bituminous miners' pensions currently average \$530 per month (Greszler 2017). For union members in the anthracite region who paid dues for years, the UMWA pension comes across as a cruel joke (AD, interview 2014).

Although the UMWA's failings were remarkable, the Catholic Church's failing of the people of the anthracite region is by far the most egregious institutional betrayal. The Church had served as a foundation stone for many newly arrive migrant families by providing a relatable community. Ethnic churches served as the strongest sources of ethnic identity for decades following the arrival of migrants from across Europe. However, the downturn in church membership and the consolidation of churches hit former coal company towns particularly hard. The Church of the Immaculate Conception in Eckley was deconsecrated in 1950 (Christian 1978). St. Nazarius Church in Pardeesville was deconsecrated in 2009 (Galski 2009). While few former parishioners of the Church of the Immaculate Conception remember the church while it was in operation, many former parishioners of St. Nazarius continue to be bitter about the closing of their church. According to oral histories, the church appealed to the congregation for financial assistance shortly before its deconsecration and then used those donations to remodel the

building's kitchen to make it attractive to potential buyers (GD, interview 2014).

Residents of Pardeesville and former members of the congregation, many of whom had been attending that church for over fifty years, felt tricked by this turn of events and that the church had sold them out. In the years following the closure of the coal industry, even the Catholic Church found itself reneging on the promises it had made to its communities.

More recent revelations have further highlighted the ways the Catholic church exploited the people of Northeastern Pennsylvania (Unified Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report 2018). A 2018 Pennsylvania Grand Jury report on the sexual abuse of minors and the church's efforts to cover-up the scandal has revealed that Robert Caperelli, an assistant pastor at Hazleton's Most Precious Blood Roman Catholic Church from September 1967 until October 1968, was sexually abusing alter boys as young as 10, 11, and 12 years old while in that position. Caperelli was reported to the police and to Bishop James Timlin in the Scranton Diocese. The police allowed the church to deal with the accusations internally, and Timlin allowed Caperelli to be moved to a different parish where he began assaulting a new set of children (Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania 2018:275). Caperelli was criminally charged with sexual abuse of a child in 1991. Bishop Timlin, who continues to represent the Scranton Diocese as an emeritus bishop today, lobbied state and federal officials to have Caperelli removed from prison and transferred to a Catholic mental health center until Caperelli's death in 1994 due to complications from AIDS. While Caperelli was an extreme example, he is hardly an isolated incident: also identified as having been accused and/or convicted of child sexual abuse by the grand jury report is Reverend Joseph Bucolo, who served at Most Precious Blood in

Hazleton during the 1950s and 1960s, St. Nazarius church in Pardeesville from 1974 until 1992, and St. Mary church in Lattimer from 1992 until 2002, as well as 18 other priests who served in catholic churches in Hazleton and West Hazleton. In many of these instances, the church provided more support for perpetrators than victims. In this way, the catholic church failed their parishioners and exploited their trust for decades.

In short, the former coal mining families of Northeastern Pennsylvania have continued to suffer in the aftermath of the company town era. Concern for the wellbeing of the working class population was transferred from the coal company in the paternalistic system to the religious, labor, and social organizations of the welfare capitalist system that succeeded the paternalist system. In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, these organizations proved inadequate and unsuited for addressing the needs of the population. Northeastern Pennsylvania, specifically the Scranton-Wilkes Barre-Hazleton region, was identified as the most unhappy metropolitan region in the country (Glaeser et al. 2014). With decades upon decades of exploitation, it is little wonder that the descendants of the women discussed in this dissertation are exasperated with their circumstances and looking for change. The nation as a whole is complicit in the abandonment of the population in Northeastern Pennsylvania, and the rise and popularity of Trump in the area is a testament to the region's anger and resiliency.

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